MARVEL

the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN®

IDENTITY CRISIS

SPIDER-MAN

IDENTITY CRISIS!

WRITERS
Todd Dezago, Tom DeFalco, Howard Mackie, J.M. DeMatteis & Glenn Greenberg with Mike Wieringo

PENCILERS
Mike Wieringo, Joe Bennett, John Romita Jr. & Luke Ross

INKERS
Richard Case, Bud LaRosa, Scott Hanna & Al Milgrom with Dan Green

COLORISTS
Gregory Wright, Bob Sharen & John Kalisz

LETTERERS
Richard Starkings & Comicraft with Kiff Scholl

EDITOR
Ralph Macchio

Front Cover Artists: Mike Wieringo, Joe Bennett, John Romita Jr. & John Romita Sr.
Back Cover Artists: John Romita & Atomic Paintbrush

Collection Editor: Mark D. Beazley
Assistant Editors: Nelson Ribeiro & Alex Starbuck
Editor, Special Projects: Jennifer Grünwald
Senior Editor, Special Projects: Jeff Youngquist
Senior Vice President of Sales: David Gabriel
SVP of Brand Planning & Communications: Michael Pasciullo
Research: Paul Bourcier
Layout: Jeph York
Production: Ryan Devall & Jessi Champion
Digital Manager/Production: Tim Smith 3
Digital Production: Kou Chen & Rachel Young

Editor In Chief: Axel Alonso
Chief Creative Officer: Joe Quesada
Publisher: Dan Buckley
Executive Producer: Alan Fine

© 2017 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental.WWW.MARVEL.COM

THE SECRET OF MY IDENTITIES

I had to ask myself as we embarked on both "Spiderhunt" and "Identity Crisis", what is the essence of Spider-Man? Why do so many readers for more than a generation so closely identify with this guy? The answer: because he's everyman. And no finer example of that all-embracing literary type has ever been conceived in this medium. But, of late, the webspinner had strayed from those roots. He was becoming too easily accepted by the public in his titles; his vitally important outsider status was in doubt. How to get that back? "Spiderhunt."

As I huddled with my writers in an out-of-town story conference at the home of *Peter Parker* scribe Howard Mackie, an idea took shape. No, it wasn't mine; it was the brainchild of the four fabulous writers who chronicle the monthly adventures of the web-slinger. The thrust of it was to have out happy-go-lucky Spidey accused of murder. Have him framed for it. This would very quickly draw mucho attention to the *Spider-Man* titles, with the bonus that it would return the webspinner's persona non grata status. I loved that. If Spider-Man should be anything, he should be the loner, the misunderstood super hero whose position as do-gooder is always in doubt with John Q. Public. "Spiderhunt" would certainly put that status quo front and center. But it also left us with a real dilemma. If the wall-crawler was suddenly to have an enormous price placed on his head, and thus every bounty hunter and his brother would be taking a shot at him, how could Spider-Man function? And would he even want to?

Enter "Identity Crisis." One thing that's true about our boy Peter Parker: he doesn't give up easily. He found himself in the position of being hunted, having gunshots directed his way every time he poked his l'il webbed head out a window. The average costumed crusader would've just said he was going to lay low until his innocence was proven. Or, he might give up the gig altogether. But not Spidey. This is a hero who was forged in the crucible of guilt and responsibility. No matter what awaited him out there, Spider-Man had a job to do protecting innocents, and he was determined to find some way to do it. But if the web-slinger couldn't appear in public, perhaps Peter Parker could assume another costumed alias. Or two. Or three. Or four. What if Peter were to take the adversity of a million dollar bounty on his head and turn it to his advantage? Naturally, we wanted each new identity Parker assumed to relate to certain personality traits of his, once we'd decided to pursue this novel idea. So, the high-flying Hornet represented Peter's knack for science and gadgetry. Remember, this is the teenager who invented web-shooters and the web fluid to go in them. Ricochet was a natural because that persona emphasized Spidey's often exuberant approach to the deadly serious business of crimefighting. Additionally, Ricochet played into the acrobatic aspects of the web-slinger's spider-birthed abilities. Prodigy worked because that character was a statement on the high moral purpose that lay at the core of Spider-Man. And Dusk was the spooky, shadow-laden persona which represented the side of Spidey that was furtive and secretive. It was stealth in matte black.

And that, for want of a more appropriate phrase, is the web-spinner's identity crisis: how to juggle four separate costumed identities and clear yourself of a murder rap at the same time. We had an absolute blast conceiving and crafting the numerous issues contained herein. It was an unprecedented creative challenge. I've never seen my crew of writers and artists more motivated for a project. and while the logistics of putting it all down on paper were tought, the results were thoroughly satisfying to me.

Now you get to experience the most bizarre chapter yet in the often strange life of the young star-crossed man from Forest Hills, Queens, whose creation was a comics landmark. And don't forget to pick up the new *Slingers* title out this fall that puts different folks in each of the new Spidey identities. But warm up first with these scintillating stories. You'll have fun, I promise.

Ralph Macchio
August 5, 1998

PREVIOUSLY

Norman Osborn, recently returned from seeming death, has used his power and influence to make life very difficult for Spider-Man. Weeks ago, Osborn pressured J. Jonah Jameson into giving him half-ownership of the Daily Bugle. Osborn then goaded Spider-Man into losing his temper; Spider-Man battered Osborn brutally, but Osborn filmed the assault and released the tape to the media. The Bugle placed a million-dollar bounty on Spider-Man's head for this "unprovoked" assault. Osborn then had a henchman attack the Parkers at home, but he accidentally shot their guest Jill Stacy, cousin of Peter's old girlfriend Gwen Stacy.

Peter's personal life became difficult as well, as both his grad school work and his growing friendship with Bugle employee Billy Walters were derailed by Peter's constant excuses to leave and fight crime. Peter's wife Mary Jane returned to college seeking a psychology degree, and MJ's Aunt Anna befriended the Parkers' young neighbor, the deaf Hope Hibbert. Anna soon came to believe that Peter's constant absences meant that he was having an affair, and angrily confronted Peter and MJ about his supposed infidelity.

Osborn had small-time thug Joey Z. killed, asphyxiated by webbing resembling Spider-Man's. The Bugle publicly labeled Spider-Man a murderer and raised the reward to five million dollars, and mercenaries and bounty hunters began attacking Spider-Man every time he appeared in public. Spider-Man covertly gave NYPD Detective Snipes a sample of his webbing, telling him to compare it to the substance that killed Joey Z., and turned to Jill's father, private investigator Arthur Stacy, for help. Osborn then had a hireling dress as his alter ego, the Green Goblin, and kidnap his grandson Normie. Osborn initially blamed Spider-Man for this crime as well, and later used the incident to help "prove" that Osborn himself was not the Goblin.

As Joe Robertson, disgusted with Osborn's Bugle takeover, quit the newspaper and took a European vacation with his wife, Flash Thompson took a job as Osborn's assistant. Elsewhere, European crimelord the Black Tarantula began muscling in on turf held by mobsters Don Fortunato and the Rose. Spider-Man confronted Black Tarantula, but the villain beat him badly and stole his mask for a trophy. Later, Spider-Man was sucked into the Negative Zone and battled Blastaar alongside supporters of a missing hero named Dusk. One supporter had donned Dusk's shadow-cloaked costume to make it appear that he was still present, and Spider-Man wore the costume during their final battle against Blastaar. When Spider-Man returned to his dimension, he brought the costume with him.

As Osborn continued smearing Spider-Man's name and bounty hunters continued dogging his every move, Peter considered giving up the webs and retiring. But Mary Jane had a different suggestion: what if he simply created a new identity?

IDENTITY CRISIS!

MARVEL COMICS

MAY
#27

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

THE SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN®

IDENTITY CRISIS!

DEZAGO
WIERINGO
CASE

WWW.MARVEL.COM

OUR STORY, FOR THE MOST PART, BEGINS HERE, TRUE BELIEVER --

DAILY BUGLE

-- WITH THE LESS THAN INCONSPICUOUS LATE NIGHT ARRIVAL OF THE ONE AND ONLY (THANK GOD!) NORTON G. FESTER!

ALSO KNOWN, IN SOME OF THE MORE STYLISH METROPOLITAN RESTAURANTS AND PSYCH WARDS, AS THE LARCENOUS AND LOQUACIOUS LOOTER!

LOOT, LOOT, LOOT...

SEE, SCHMOOPIE -- I TOLD YOU THERE WAS NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT...

...AND YOU SAID YOU WERE AFRAID OF HEIGHTS?!

NOW THAT WE'VE FINALLY FOUND A WAY TO TAP INTO THE FANTASTIC OUTER-SPATIAL ENERGIES THAT WERE, FOR SO LONG, LOCKED AWAY WITHIN YOUR BEAUTEMOUS, METEORIC... PHYSIQUE --

-- NOW WE CAN ACHIEVE THE GREATNESS WE WERE INTENDED FOR!

YOU GUESSED IT, FRIEND! THE DIAGNOSIS IS... DELUSIONAL! - RubberRoomRalf.

OKAY, BABY -- IT'S GO TIME!

SMOOCHIE-

C'MON, BABY -- YOU CAN DO IT...

...ERNNT!

-ERNNT!-

YOU'RE TIRED? MAYBE YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE STAYED UP TO WATCH CONAN LAST NIGHT...

...IT'S ALL RIGHT, PRECIOUS...

...I'LL GET US IN!

KRESSH

THERE IT *IS*, SWEETIE -- AS SEEN ON *TV!* A SAFE FULL OF *BOUNTY MONEY* JUST WAITING TO BE *L-L-L-LOOTED!*

AND WITH BUT A *TUG* FROM MY METEOR-BESTOWED... BESTOWN... Er... *GRANTED -- SUPER-STRENGTH --*

RRRRUNK

-- IT *YIELDS* TO OUR *SUPERIOR MINISTRATIONS!*

CAN YOU *HEAR* IT, PRINCESS ..? THAT'S *FIVE MILLION DOLLARS* CALLING MY --

FESTER!?! --

Uh-Oh.

-- HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU "NOT TO PLAY WITH DIRTY MONEY?!"

SENSATIONAL Stan Lee presents: SPIDER-HORNET!?

INVENTING THE HORNET!

TODD DEZAGO Script
MIKE WIERINGO Co-Plotters
RICH CASE Pencils
Inks
RS & COMICRAFT'S KIFF SCHOLL Letters
GREGORY WRIGHT Colors
RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR
BOB HARRAS Chief

WHO TH-?!

WHAT'S THAT YOU SAY, SPIDER-PHILE? YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE PICKING UP A MARVELOUS MAG OF YOUR FAVORITE WEB-SLINGING WALL-CRAWLER..?!

WELL TRUST US... YOU DID...

...THEN WHERE, YOU SAY, IS THE JUMPING AND FLIPPING AND THE THWIPPING..?!

WELL, TO ANSWER THAT QUERY, O LOYAL ONE, WE NEED TO DO A LITTLE JUMPING OF OUR OWN... BACK TO SEVERAL NIGHTS AGO, AT --

© 2017 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. WWW.MARVEL.COM

-- THE WAREHOUSE WORKSHOP OF **HOBIE BROWN**, ELECTRONICS WIZARD, INVENTOR AND PART TIME **PROWLER!**

OH, YEAH... AND PAL!

I **MEAN IT**, MAN -- WHATEVER YOU NEED! AFTER ALL YOU'VE DONE **FOR ME**... I OWE YOU A SOLID AND **THEN SOME!**

AND WITH THE WAY EVERYONE'S BEEN COMING **DOWN** ON YOU LATELY...

TELL ME ABOUT IT. THE BUGLE SPENDS MORE TIME PAINTING ME **PUBLIC ENEMY NO. 1** THAN THEY DO REPORTING THE NEWS! IT'S **NUTS!**

THEY'VE ACCUSED ME OF **MURDER!** AND **KIDNAPPING!** AND PUTTING THE FIVE MILLION BOUNTY ON MY HEAD ONLY **BROUGHT** ALL THE **MUSCLEHEADS** OUT FROM UNDER THEIR ROCKS!

PEOPLE ARE GETTING **HURT** OR **KILLED** OVER THIS! **INNOCENT KIDS** ARE BEING CAUGHT IN THE **CROSSFIRE!**

IT'S TO THE POINT WHERE THE MOST **RESPONSIBLE THING** TO DO IS TO STOP BEING SPIDER-MAN...

...SOOOO... **I'M** THINKIN' --

DAILY BUGLE
NEW YORK'S FINEST DAILY NEWSPAPER
I'LL TAKE SPIDERS FOR 5 MILLION, ALEX

-- IF I CAN'T BE **SPIDEY**, WHO **CAN** I BE..?

AND WHO DO I KNOW THAT MIGHT HAVE A FEW **TRICKS** UP HIS INVENTIVE SLEEVE..?

WELL, THERE'S ***THIS.*** IT'S LIKE A ***JET PACK,*** WITH AUTO-GYROS AND WHATNOT...

I'VE BEEN WORKING ON IT FOR ABOUT A ***YEAR,*** AND IT OPERATES JUST ***FINE...*** EXCEPT FOR ***ONE CONTINUING,*** PAIN-IN-THE-BUTT ***PROBLEM*** --

?

-- IT'S ***TOO HEAVY!***

YOU'D BREAK YOUR ***BACK*** IF YOU TRIED TO PUT IT ***ON!*** I'VE RECAST THE COMPONENTS IN THE ***LIGHTEST*** METALS --

-- EVEN TRIED TO FIT IT WITH AN ***ANTI-GRAV HARNESS,*** BUT IT'S --

-- HEY, WEB-HEAD?! ARE YOU EVEN LISTEN-

Oh.

YEAH...

...STUPID ***ME..!*** ***I'M*** TALKIN' ABOUT THE PACK BEING TOO ***HEAVY*** --

WITH SOMEONE WHO CAN ***BENCH-PRESS*** THE ***HULK!***

SORRY, HOBES. I WAS JUST LOOKING AT ***THIS.***

THIS IS GIVING ME A ***GREAT IDEA.***

DAILY BUGLE

NEW YORK'S FINEST DAILY NEWSPAPER

SWARMED!

Exclusive by Richard Werner

A swarm of killer bees, as seen here in Central Park yesterday, have invaded the city. Hundreds of New Yorkers have been hospitalized and over two dozen with severe cases of bee-stings.

Susan Gerardi, spokesperson for the bees says "Don't be so hard on them. They may be killer Bees, but they don't have a choice. They're born that way." When asked how to deal with them, Gerardi suggested, " Wrap yourself in a cool wet gauze and cover yourself with newspapers. Then stay in your basement or wine cellar. But whatever you do, don't eat sugar."

Janathon Klein, spokesman for the National Sugar Campaign held a press conference in which he stated, " I'm sick of how quack public officials are to hoalmouth sugar. Sure it gives you cavities and attracts killer bees, but it's spoon sweet. And darn good on a big bowl of steaming oatmeal."

Katharine Gibson, spokeswoman for the International House of Oatmeal had this to say: "Jan is so right. So right."

Meanwhile, since this article began, 200 more New Yorkers and one Texan have been hospitalized for bee stings. The Texan was an isolated incident as he was in Guam at the time, but we promise to keep every element of this story as fresh and complete as we know how. See, I went to college in Upstate New York, and there are a lot of bees there. Just not that many are murderers.

...the killer Bees are seen circling P.S. 122's discarded ...ld trip lunch. The school's excursion was cancelled ...hen the kids could no longer see the sky due to the ...amount of bees."

See "Killer Bees" on page B2.

For your daily horoscope see page D5

Also: Adrian Ruiloff's Hollywood Minute in the Calendar section for his interview with renowned porn star Gregory Gallagher.

...LIKE A FEATHER.

YEAH, FOR ***YOU***, MAYBE...

...NOW, IT'S ALL ***CYBERNETICS***, SO YOU WANT TO BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU --

-- THINK.

Oh, MAN.

FWOOOM

TAKE IT, MAN -- WITH MY ***BLESSINGS***. JUST PROMISE ME ***ONE*** THING IF YOU'RE GONNA START IT UP --

-- ***YOU TAKE IT OUTSIDE FIRST!***

SORRY, HOBIE. BUT I GOTTA ***TELL*** YA --

-- ***THIS*** IS GONNA BE THE ***BEST!***

WHICH BRINGS US BACK TO WHERE WE STARTED...

...WELL, KINDA ALMOST...

GIVE IT UP, LOOTER! YOU KNOW WE ALWAYS... Er... I MEAN...

I KNOW NOTHING! --

-- ESPECIALLY YOU! I'VE NEVER EVEN SEEN YOU BEFORE!

BUT THAT WON'T STOP ME --

-- FROM STOPPING YOU FROM STOPPING ME!

THAT FIVE MIL IS MINE! I LOOTED IT! AND I'M THE BEST THERE IS AT WHAT I DO!

WHICH IS LOOT.

MEANWHILE --

KBASH

-- WORKING LATE IN HIS SMALL OFFICE DOWN THE HALL IN THE DAILY BUGLE, FLASH THOMPSON BECOMES SUSPICIOUS...

THAT CRASH!? I THOUGHT I HEARD SOMETHING IN Mr. OSBORN'S OFFICE BEFORE, BUT NOW I'M POSITIVE...

...BETTER CHECK IT OUT...

THAT'S ***FAR ENOUGH, BEE-MAN!*** OR ***Mr. STING!*** OR ***WHATEVER*** YOUR NAME IS!

YOU ARE NOW IN THE SIGHTS OF THE MOST ***POWERFUL ELEMENT*** IN THE ***UNIVERSE!*** NOW THAT I'VE TAPPED INTO MY METEOR'S ***FANTASMIC ENERGIES,*** AND ADJUSTED THE SETTING ON THE GUN'S ***SELECTO-RAY*** --

-- IT WOULD TAKE BUT A ***TWITCH*** OF MY FINGER TO ***VAPORIZE*** YOU LIKE SO MUCH --

HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH

LOOTIE... IT'S JUST A ***ROCK!*** YOU FOUND THE METEOR, THE GAS CAME OUT, IT GAVE YOU SUPER-STRENGTH, ***THAT'S IT!*** END OF STORY. IT'S ***DEAD.*** IT'S JUST A ***WORTHLESS HUNK OF STONE*** --

ALL YOU'VE DONE ***NOW*** IS PUT A ***BARREL*** AND A ***STOCK*** ON IT...

YOU... YOU MEAN IT'S --

ALL RIGHT, YOU JERKS! WHADDAYA THINK YOU'RE DOING IN ***Mr. OSBORN'S*** OFF-

JUST A ROCK, Huh?

NOT SO FUNNY ***NOW, IS*** IT, PROFESSOR ***BUZZY?*** ...NOW IF YOU'LL JUST ***SLIDE*** ME THAT BRIEFCASE, I'LL BE HAPPY TO GIVE YOU -- WHAT'S YOUR NAME, HOT-SHOT? --

Um... F-FLASH..?

-- I'LL BE HAPPY TO GIVE YOU ***FLASH*** BACK...

...FLASHBACK...

...FLASHBACK...

YES, WELL, IT WAS JUST THE **OTHER NIGHT**, WHILE I WAS LOUNGING AROUND IN MY **HIDDEN SECRET LAIR** WHICH I HAD RECENTLY **PURLOINED** FROM THE NOTORIOUS **OWL...**

IT HAD BEEN ABANDONED. – R-owlf.

WE WERE WATCHING THE NEWS, WAITING FOR **SEINFELD** TO COME ON...

...COOPERATION WITH THE NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT, THE **DAILY BUGLE** OFFERS THIS **FIVE MILLION BOUNTY** FOR THE CAPTURE OF THE MURDEROUS VIGILANTE KNOWN AS **SPIDER-MAN.** WE WILL...

FIVE MILLION DOLLARS. JUST ***SITTING*** IN THAT OFFICE, ***WAITING*** FOR US TO COME AND... ***RELIEVE*** THEM OF IT!

THAT MONEY COULD BE OURS, POOKIE... WITH MY LEGENDARY LOOTING SKILLS...

...AND ***YOUR*** NEWLY HARNESSED ***METEORIC-POWER,*** IT WOULD BE LIKE TAKING ***TOAST*** FROM A ***TOASTER!***

WHAT DO YOU ***SAY,*** PRECIOUS... ARE YOU ***IN?***

Oh, ***SNOOKIE!*** YOU'VE MADE ME SO ***HAPPY!***

YOU KNOW, WHEN WE OKAY'D THIS FLASHBACK, THIS WASN'T REALLY WHAT WE HAD IN MIND...

WHAT WE WERE REALLY SHOOTIN' FOR WAS...

EARLIER TONIGHT, AT THE HOME OF PETER AND MARY JANE PARKER --

PETER, ARE YOU **DONE?** YOU'VE BEEN **PLAYING AROUND** UP HERE FOR **HOURS,** AND --

-- Oh.

WOW.

D'YA **LIKE** IT?

WELL, THE **LINES** ARE GREAT AND THE **COLORS** WORK, BUT **MAYBE** I SHOULD **REDESIGN** THE --

HONEY! YOUR DESIGNS ARE **PERFECT!** IT ALL CAME TOGETHER WITHOUT A HITCH! IT'S THE **BEST!**

AND WAIT'LL YOU SEE HOW THIS BABY **HANDLES!**

Oh, **NO** Mr. PARKER! YOU ARE **NOT** GETTING ME UP IN ONE OF -

WHAT'D I TELL YOU, HONEY... ISN'T THIS *GREAT?!* WE'RE *FLYING!*

YEAH, TIGER -- GREAT... ARE YOU SURE YOU'VE GOT ME..?

YES, I'VE *GOT* YOU BUT DON'T YOU *FEEL* IT, MJ..?

...I FEEL SO LIBERATED! SO...

...*FREE!* LIKE WE'VE FINALLY *RISEN UP* ABOVE ALL THE *GARBAGE* THAT'S BEEN POLLUTING *OUR LIVES* LATELY!

LIKE THIS NEW IDENTITY IS GIVING US A *CLEAN START*, GIVING US OUR *LIVES* BACK!

OOOH -- I LIKE THE SOUND OF *THAT*. MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO *LAND* THIS THING SOME-PLACE AND I CAN --

-- *HEY*... DO YOU HEAR *HONKING?*

HONK
HONK
HONK
HONK
HONK
PETER! -- IT'S GEESE!
HANG ON! HANG ON! WE'LL BE ALL RI-
SHLIK
SHKUK
OMIGOD! PETER, WE'RE FALLING!
IT'S OKAY... I THINK WE JUST GOT SOME FEATHERS CAUGHT IN THE INTAKE VENTS --
DO SOMETHING!
RIGHT, RIGHT.
QUICK, MJ -- PULL MY FINGER!
PETER! THIS IS NO TIME FOR -

NO, HONEY -- IT RELEASES THE *GAUNTLET!*

I CAN'T *DO IT* AND HOLD *YOU* AT THE SAME TIME..!

CHK'K

GOOD.

PETERRR...

THWIP

I'M *THWIPPIN'*, I'M *THWIPPIN'!*

THWAP

GOT IT.

WELL, I GUESS YOU CAN TAKE THE *MAN* OUT OF THE *SPIDER*, BUT YOU CAN'T -

SAVE IT, HOMER. YOU JUST TOOK *TWENTY YEARS* OFF MY LIFE, AND ONCE MY *HEART* STARTS BEATING AGAIN, I'M GOING TO *KILL YOU!*

Oh, *MAN!* IS THAT THE TIME?!

I'VE GOT TO GET YOU *BACK HOME!* I WAS SUPPOSED TO MEET *BILLY FIVE MINUTES* AGO!

I WOULD BE MORE THAN WILLING TO TAKE A CAB.

AND...

MAN, THIS LIKE TOTALLY *BITES* IT!

THIS IS LIKE, THE *FOURTH TIME* PETER'S BLOWN ME OFF WHEN WE WERE GONNA *HANG!* WHAT'S *UP* WITH HIM?

I MEAN, I WANT US TO BE *BUDS* AND EVERYTHING, BUT NOT IF HE'S GONNA --

-- *WHOA! WHAT'S THAT?*

SOMETHING MUSTA PASSED IN *FRONT* OF THE *MOON*, BUT THAT WAS... *FREAKY*...

LIKE, *X-FILES* FREAKY..! I'M GOIN' *HOME*...

AND ABOVE --

-- *THE VILLAINOUS* ***VULTURE*** *SOARS THROUGH THE CITY'S* ***CONCRETE CANYONS*** --

-- *OBSESSED WITH BUT* ***ONE THOUGHT***; *TO* ***FIND*** *AND* ***DESTROY*** *THE* ***ONE MAN*** *RESPONSIBLE FOR* ***STEALING AWAY*** *HIS* ***MISAPPROPRIATED*** *YOUTH* --

-- *THAT WALL-CRAWLING* ***MISCREANT*** -- ***SPIDER-MAN!***

AND THAT SHOULD REALLY CATCH US UP... WE THINK...

...SO JUST SLIDE ME THE BRIEFCASE, HORNET HEAD, AND NO ONE GET'S HURT!

MAN, I KNOW THAT GUN IS HARMLESS..! THAT ROCK IS JUST A ROCK...

...BUT THE LOOTER DOES HAVE SUPER-STRENGTH! AND HE DOES HAVE FLASH IN A PRECARIOUS POSITION... HE COULD EASILY SNAP HIS NECK IF I TRIED ANYTHING!

...AND THOUGH I DON'T BELIEVE HE WOULD, I CAN'T TAKE THAT CHANCE...

DON'T THINK I'M BLUFFING, BUZZY -- I'VE GOT A METEOR HERE, AND I'M NOT AFRAID TO USE IT!

WHY, MY LITTLE PRINCESS HERE IS CAPABLE OF DOING THINGS YOU COULDN'T EVEN IMAGINE! SO DON'T PUSH ME! I'M A TOUGH GUY!

Oh, I BELIEVE IT. ALTHOUGH I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU'RE GONNA DO ANY-THING WITH THAT GUN --

-- SINCE YOU LEFT THE SELECTO-RAY ON POACH..?

WHAT?! BUT I THOUGHT-

POW

MADE YA LOOK.

POW

BIFF

KRAK

SOK

ALL RIGHT! HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!

ON THE *FLOOR*, LOOTER -- OR I *USE* THIS THING!

NO! PLEASE! MY BABY... DON'T!

YOU... YOU HAVE NO *IDEA* OF THE *POWER!* THE OTHER-WORLDLY *ENERGIES* YOU COULD *RELEASE!* IT'S -

HEY!? *WAIT A MINUTE* -- THIS ISN'T EVEN A *ROCK..!*

THIS FEELS LIKE --

S.H.I.E.L.D. AGENTS! EVERYBODY FREEZE!

W'EVE BEEN *WATCHING* YOU, FESTER -- WE *WANT* THE METEOR.

MY SNOOKIE *DARLING?!* *NO*, THEY CAN'T *HAVE YOU!* I'LL -

THWIT THWIT THWIT

...SHE'S MINE! SHE'Sss..

WH-WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?

THAT WOULD BE *ME.*

SEDATIVE STINGERS.

AND THANK YOU FOR THE *ASSIST,* BEN... I KNEW THEY'D COME IN *HANDY,* BRO.

AND SHORTLY --

DAILY BU

...TOTALLY *PHENOMENAL!* YOU'RE A REAL *HERO!*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN -- THIS IS... *THE HORNET!*

HE RISKED HIS *LIFE* TONIGHT TO SAVE *MINE* AND ALSO PREVENTED THE ROBBERY OF THE *FIVE MILLION BOUNTY* THAT THE *DAILY BUGLE* IS OFFERING FOR -

-- HORNET --

-- HORNET --

-- HORNET --

-- HORNET --

WXYZ CHANNEL 4

NORMAN OSBORN, M'BOY!

WANTED TO THANK YOU *PERSONALLY* FOR WHAT YOU DID THIS EVENING.

ALTHOUGH THERE WAS *NEVER* ANY MONEY IN THAT BRIEFCASE. WHO KEEPS *FIVE MILLION* IN THEIR OFFICE SAFE, AM I *RIGHT?* BUT WE'LL HAVE A CHANCE TO DISCUSS THIS LATER IN *MORE DETAIL, WON'T WE?*

YES, I COULD REALLY USE A MAN WITH *YOUR SKILLS* ON *MY TEAM...*

Mr. HORNET -- YOU'RE ***NEW*** TO THE NEW YORK SUPER HERO SCENE... WHERE DO YOU ***COME*** FROM?

...Er, FROM? ...I'M...Uh...

WWAD CHANNEL 2 NYC

I'M FROM ***CHARLOTTE!***

ARE YOU HERE TO GO AFTER THE ***SPIDER-MAN BOUNTY?***

HE HASN'T BEEN ***SEEN*** FOR --

Ah... LET'S JUST SAY THAT I DON'T THINK YOU'LL HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ***SPIDER-MAN*** FROM NOW ON!

ARE YOU STILL MARRIED TO JANET VAN DYNE?

Huh? Oh, NO, THAT'S-

WILL YOU BE ***REJOINING*** THE ***AVENGERS?***

Um, NO, WAIT, THAT'S NOT ME! THAT'S YELLOWJ-

HORNET

HORNET

HORNET

Um, I'M ***SORRY -- EXCUSE*** ME --

-- I'VE GOTTA ***GO...***

AGGHHHHHHHH

19 WWAD CHANNEL NYC

NEARBY --

-- THE SPECTACULAR APPEARANCE OF A STARTLING NEW HERO -- TONIGHT FOLLOWING 'E.R.' --

HEALTH DEPT. A

MAN, I REALLY THOUGHT THAT PETER AND I WERE ON OUR WAY TO BECOMING PALS, BUT IT SEEMS LIKE EVERY TIME WE HAVE PLANS TO HANG TOGETHER --

-- HE BAGS OUT..!

"I DUNNO. MAYBE PETER PARKER ISN'T THE TYPE OF GUY YOU CAN BE FRIENDS WITH..!"

'...WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT SPIDER-MAN ANYMORE!'..?!

TO WHAT DO YOU IMPLY?!

ENOUGH!

KRONCCH

SPIDER-MAN WAS MY VENGEANCE! HE WAS MINE TO KILL!

IF THIS... THIS... THIS HORNET HAS ROBBED ME OF MY FINAL REVENGE --

-- THEN HE SHALL PAY WITH HIS LIFE!

NEXT ISSUE:
HE PAYS...!

MARVEL® COMICS

MAY #434

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

WWW.MARVEL.COM

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN®

IDENTITY CRISIS!

DEFALCO BENNETT LAROSA MILGRO

Stan Lee presents:

'Round and 'Round with RICOCHET!

THERE'S AN ANCIENT CHINESE CURSE... "MAY YOU LIVE IN INTERESTING TIMES!"

SOMEBODY -- AND THERE'S A VERITABLE ROGUES GALLERY OF SUSPECTS -- MUST HAVE PUT A REAL WHAMMY ON ME!

IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS I'VE BEEN ACCUSED OF MURDERING SOME LOWLIFE --

-- THE DAILY BUGLE POSTED A FIVE MILLION DOLLAR BOUNTY ON MY HEAD --

-- THE POLICE, ALONG WITH EVERY TESTOSTERONE CASE IN THE CITY, ARE CURRENTLY HUNTING ME --

-- AND I WAS ALMOST BEATEN TO DEATH BY A NEW GANGLORD WHO CALLS HIMSELF THE BLACK TARANTULA!

OOPS! ALMOST FORGOT THE MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT...

...I ALSO GAVE UP BEING SPIDER-MAN!

Tom DeFalco
Writer

Joe Bennett
Pencils

Bud LaRosa
Inks

R.S. & Comicraft's Kiff Scholl
Letters

Bob Sharen
Colors

Ralph Macchio
Editor

Bob Harras
Editor in Chief

© 2017 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. WWW.MARVEL.COM

AND I HAVE A BRAND NEW COSTUMED IDENTITY!

(FOUR OF THEM, IN FACT)

W-WHO ARE YOU?

I'LL GIVE YOU GUYS A HINT...MY NAME BEGINS WITH AN *R*... AND RHYMES WITH *MACRAME!*

Y-YOU SOME KIND'A *JOKER?!*

NO WAY, MAN! JOKER STARTS WITH A *J* --

-- AND I HAVE ENOUGH PERSONAL HASSLES WITHOUT GETTING INVOLVED IN A TRADEMARK DISPUTE!

JUST CALL ME RICOCHET!

TH-THEM CRAZY DISKS -- THEY'RE *BOUNCIN'* ALL OVER THE PLACE!

WELL, DUUH! IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY GUESSED --

-- MY *NOM DE COSTUME* IS OF THE IRON MAN SCHOOL OF SUBTLETY!

RICOCHET APPLIES TO MY *WEAPONS* --

-- AND MY RATHER AMAZING *ATHLETIC ABILITIES!*

COOOOL, HUH?

I DON'T EXPECT A RESPONSE...

...THESE POOR STIFFS WERE IN THE MIDDLE OF A FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD HIJACKING WHEN I CHANCED UPON THEM.

WHILE THIS DOESN'T HAPPEN TO BE MY NEIGHBORHOOD, I COULDN'T RESIST THE OPPORTUNITY TO TEST OUT MY NEW LOOK --

-- AND TO SHOW OFF FOR THE LOVELY LASS WHO'S BEEN FOLLOWING ME FOR THE PAST NINE BLOCKS.

WHY'D YOU *ATTACK* US? WHAT DO YOU *WANT?*

YOU ANOTHER *CAPTAIN AMERICA WANNABE?!*

NAH! I'M STRICTLY IN THE COSTUME BIZ FOR MY OWN PROFIT.

I WANT A PIECE OF WHATEVER ACTION YOU GUYS ARE TRYING TO HUSTLE!

WHY SETTLE FOR A ***PIECE***... WHEN YOU CAN HAVE AN ENTIRE ***CASE!***

WH-WHAT'S THE HAUL-- *VIDEO EQUIPMENT? COMPUTERS? FURS?*

STUFFED ANIMALS--?!

OF COURSE!

THESE ARE THE ***BEAR BABIES*** THAT ALL THE KIDS WANT!

NOT BAD, GENTLEMEN! YOU CAN PROBABLY EXPECT TWENTY... TWENTY-FIVE BUCKS A BEAR.

ABOUT TEN CASES... WITH A HUNDRED OR SO BEARS PER... BRINGS YOU UP AROUND $25,000!

I KNOW YOU'VE GOT EXPENSES TO CONSIDER-- *LIKE KICKBACKS, BRIBES, AND FENCING FEES--* BUT IT'S STILL A DECENT NIGHT'S PAY!

AND THAT'S EVEN AFTER YOU SUBTRACT MY CUT!

I'M WILLING TO ACCEPT $5,000-- BUT THAT'S ONLY IF YOU HAVE THE CASH ON HAND! THE PRICE WILL BE HIGHER IF I HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL YOU--

WHEEEEEEE

UH-OH! SOUNDS LIKE SOMEBODY PUT IN A CALL TO 911.

WHERE'S THAT FAMOUS NEW YORK ANTIPATHY FOR INVOLVEMENT WHEN YOU REALLY NEED IT?

ROCCO

GUESS NOBODY'S GONNA PROFIT TONIGHT, FELLAS...

EXCEPT L'IL OLD ME!

RUMOR HAS IT THAT THE **BLACK TARANTULA** WAS RECENTLY GRANTED AN EXCLUSIVE ON ALL HIJACKINGS WITHIN THIS SECTION OF **MANHATTAN.**

IF THAT'S TRUE, HE WON'T BE REAL HAPPY TO HEAR THAT I'M POACHING ON HIS TURF.

OOH! POOR BABY!

HE MAY NOT REALIZE IT, BUT I'M DETERMINED TO BECOME THE **EL NINO** OF HIS NIGHTMARES.

HE RECENTLY CAUGHT ME ON AN OFF DAY, AND BEAT ME INTO A BLOODY PULP!

AS IF THAT WASN'T BAD ENOUGH, HE ALSO CHOSE TO **HUMILIATE** ME--

-- BY RIPPING OFF MY MASK--

-- AND KEEPING IT FOR A **TROPHY!**

IT WASN'T LIKE HE EVEN CARED ABOUT MY SECRET IDENTITY...

...HE NEVER EVEN GLANCED AT MY FACE.

AS FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED, I WAS COMPLETELY BENEATH HIS NOTICE.

THE TARANTULA MAY HAVE DRAWN FIRST BLOOD--

-- BUT I'LL WIN THE WAR!

DAILY

ALTHOUGH I DID TURN UP A FEW DISTURBING FACTS THE OTHER DAY AT THE DAILY BUGLE...

I'M TELLING YOU, PARKER, THIS CAN'T BE RIGHT!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, BEN?

I'VE BEEN HITTING ALL MY CONTACTS, BOTH IN LAW ENFORCEMENT AND THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS MEDIA, TRYING TO DIG UP DIRT ON THE ***BLACK TARANTULA.***

SO--?! IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE MANAGED TO LOCATE QUITE A FEW SOURCES.

YEAH, BUT I'M NOT SURE I CAN TRUST ***ANY*** OF 'EM.

WHY NOT?

BECAUSE A LOT OF THESE REFERENCES DATE BACK TO BEFORE THE LAST ***WORLD WAR...***

...IF THE GUY WAS ONLY IN HIS ***TEENS*** WHEN HE STARTED BUILDING HIS CRIMINAL EMPIRE, HE'D BE IN HIS ***SIXTIES*** BY NOW!

IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THE MAN I FOUGHT IS SOME KIND OF SUPER-POWERED IMMORTAL?

THAT WOULD CERTAINLY EXPLAIN HOW HE TRASHED ME SO EASILY.

HI, PETER! I HOPE YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN THAT YOU PROMISED TO TAKE ME SHOPPING THIS AFTERNOON.

I'LL...*Uh*... BE RIGHT WITH YOU, ***MARY JANE.***

TRY TO RESTRAIN YOURSELF, TIGER. THIS IS A PLACE OF BUSINESS, AFTER ALL. SUCH ENTHUSIASTIC DISPLAYS OF PASSION MIGHT EMBARRASS YOUR COWORKERS.

YOU'D BETTER GO, PETE. IT NEVER PAYS TO KEEP THE WIFE WAITING. WE'LL FINISH LATER.

D-DID I MISS SOMETHING, HONEY?

CLUELESS! ABSOLUTELY CLUELESS!

WHERE ARE ***YOU*** OFF TO IN SUCH A HURRY, PARKER?

Oh, GREAT...

DAILY BUGLE

NEW YORK'S FINEST DAILY NEWSPAPER

I ASSUME YOU'VE SEEN OUR MORNING EDITION, M'BOY.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE CITY'S NEWEST COSTUMED CRIME-FIGHTER?

SORRY, NORMAN, I BYPASSED THAT STORY AND WENT STRAIGHT TO ***DILBERT.***

DO I DETECT A NOTE OF ***HOSTILITY,*** M'BOY? DO YOU, PERHAPS, TAKE ISSUE WITH ***THE HORNET'S*** STATEMENT ABOUT US NOT HAVING TO WORRY ABOUT ***SPIDER-MAN*** ANYMORE?

NOPE, BUT I WOULDN'T BUY INTO THAT BLOWHARD'S RAP UNLESS I WAS READY FOR A MAJOR DISAPPOINTMENT.

IF YOU DON'T MIND, MR. OSBORN, PETER AND I HAVE THINGS TO DO.

HEY, EVERYBODY! I JUST GOT A POSTCARD FROM ***JOE*** AND ***MARTHA ROBERTSON!***

HOW ARE THEY ENJOYING ***EUROPE,*** GLORY?

ACCORDING TO THIS, THEY'RE HAVING A ***GREAT*** TIME. THEY'RE IN ***GREECE*** NOW.

THEY'VE ALREADY TOURED ATTICA AND ATHENS, AND ARE HEADED FOR THE ISLAND OF ***EUBOEA*** WHICH IS SOMEWHERE IN THE ***AEGEAN SEA.***

EUBOEA--?!

IF YOU PEOPLE WILL PLEASE EXCUSE ME, A PRESSING MATTER DEMANDS MY ATTENTION.

MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE ALSO SENT A CARD TO ***NORMAN OSBORN***...

YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS, MARTHA. YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL ABOUT THAT MAN. HE'S THE REASON WHY I LEFT THE ***BUGLE***.

EXACTLY! IF IT WEREN'T FOR HIM, YOU'D STILL BE STRESSING OUT IN THAT MISERABLE JOB, INSTEAD OF RELAXING ON THIS BEAUTIFUL COAST-LINE.

COME JOIN ME, JOE! THIS VIEW IS BREATHTAKING...

I'LL BE RIGHT WITH YOU, DEAR. I JUST HAVE TO... *Er*... CHECK UP ON OUR DINNER RESERVATIONS.

NEWSWEEK

LIFE

I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOUR CALL, ROBERTSON. I HAVE CONFIRMED THAT THE ***YACHT*** IS OWNED BY OSBORN.

HAVE YOU FOUND IT YET?

I BELIEVE I KNOW THE LOCATION... AND I EXPECT TO DROP BY TONIGHT.

CALL ME TOMORROW IF YOU LEARN ANYTHING!

YES...OF COURSE!

EVERYTHING OKAY?

COULDN'T BE BETTER!

ALL I'M SAYING IS THAT OSBORN SEEMED PRETTY DISTURBED BY ROBBIE'S POSTCARD.

AHH! YOU'RE JUST JEALOUS BECAUSE YOUR ***"I WOULDN'T BUY INTO THAT BLOWHARD"*** SPEECH DIDN'T EVEN FAZE HIM.

ALTHOUGH I RATHER ENJOYED THE IRONY OF HIM TELLING YOU ABOUT ***THE HORNET.***

STOP

YEAH, THAT WAS KINDA COOL... BUT IS THIS SHOPPING TRIP NECESSARY?

PROBABLY NOT... BUT IT'S BETTER TO BE SAFE THAN SORRY.

YOU AGREED TO STOP BEING ***SPIDER-MAN*** WHILE THAT FIVE MILLION DOLLAR BOUNTY IS STILL ON YOUR HEAD.

Y'KNOW, OTHERS TRIED CHANGING THEIR IDENTITIES BEFORE -- LIKE THE ***ABSORBING MAN, TITANIA,*** AND THE ***THUNDER-BOLTS*** --

-- BUT THEY ALWAYS GET EXPOSED!

YOU'RE GOING TO TRY TO BEAT THE ODDS BY TAKING ON A ***FEW*** NEW LOOKS.

YOU ALREADY HAVE THE ***HORNET*** SUIT YOU GOT FROM YOUR FRIEND HOBIE BROWN... THAT ***DUSK*** COSTUME WHICH YOU RECENTLY GOT IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE... AND THAT ***PRODIGY*** IDENTITY WHICH WE DESIGNED TOGETHER.

ONE MORE SHOULD DO IT!

HERE! WE HAVE TO DISGUISE OURSELVES IN CASE WE FIND ANYTHING.

RECYCLED RAIMENT?

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE TAKING ME INTO A USED CLOTHING STORE.

RECYCLED RAIMENT

HEY! NOT MY FAULT! WE'RE WORKING ON A TIGHT BUDGET.

I THINK YOU'RE JUST INTO PLAYING ***DRESS-UP.***

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, YOU DO BEAR A VAGUE RESEMBLANCE TO A ***DOLL*** I USED TO PLAY WITH.

KEN --?!

MISTER POTATO HEAD!

CHECK THIS OUT, TIGER!

AND IT EVEN COMES WITH AN ***INSIGNIA*** ON THE BACK!

AN ***R*** --?!

YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING!

THAT WHOLE LEATHER JACKET CRAZE DIED OUT YEARS AGO!

DON'T YOU BELIEVE IT, MISTER. LEATHER IS ALWAYS IN STYLE.

THAT JACKET'S FROM A ***RODEO BAR*** THAT FOLDED A FEW YEARS AGO. I MAY EVEN HAVE A MATCHING ***T-SHIRT*** IN THE BACK.

IF WE HAVE A ***FIT,*** YOU HAVE A ***SALE.***

GREAT! JUST GREAT! NOW WE HAVE TO COME UP WITH A COOL NAME WHICH BEGINS WITH ***R.***

HOW HARD CAN THAT BE?

K-MART

A LOT HARDER THAN WHEN I FIRST STARTED OUT.

AND I CAN'T THINK OF A SINGLE COSTUMED HERO WHOSE NAME BEGINS WITH ***R...***

ROCKET RACER.

ROGUE.

RED WOLF.

K-MART

OKAY! OKAY!

AND THEN, THERE'S ALWAYS ***ROBIN...***

...THE ROCKETEER...

...ROBOCOP...

K-MART

AND THE REST, AS THEY SAY, IS **HISTORY!**

GOT TO GIVE **MARY JANE** CREDIT! SHE DESIGNED THE MASK, PUT THE REST OF THIS OUTFIT TOGETHER --

-- AND EVEN CAME UP WITH THE NAME!

OF COURSE, SHE'LL PROBABLY QUESTION MY DECISION TO PLAY **RICOCHET** AS A LESS THAN LAW-ABIDING MEMBER OF SOCIETY.

BUT THAT'S AN **AD-LIB** WHICH SUDDENLY OCCURRED TO ME --

-- WHEN MY **SPIDER-SENSE** CLUED ME TO THE FACT THAT SOMEONE WAS SHADOWING ME!

AS A WELL-BEHAVED **WEB-SLINGER** --

-- I LEARNED THAT I SHOULD ALWAYS FOLLOW MY **INSTINCTS!**

HERE'S HOPING A BOUNCING BUNDLE OF FUN SHOULD DO THE SAME --

-- BECAUSE IT'S TIME I CONFRONTED A CERTAIN SHAPELY SILHOUETTE!

HI THERE!

I USUALLY DON'T MAKE A HABIT OF APPROACHING STRANGE WOMEN -- *MUCH TOO BILL CLINTONISH* FOR A SENSITIVE GUY LIKE ME --

-- BUT I FIGURED I'D MAKE AN EXCEPTION IN YOUR CASE.

I WAS WONDERING WHEN YOUR CURIOSITY WOULD FINALLY GET THE BEST OF YOU, LITTLE BOY.

I AM Delilah!

HOOCHEE-MAMA!

ANYBODY WHO HIRES LOSERS LIKE THAT DESERVES TO BE --

--HEY!

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA, LADY? ARE YOU WITH THE SAME GANG?

HARDLY! I WORK FOR A RIVAL ORGANIZATION, AND WE'RE PRESENTLY ON A RECRUITMENT DRIVE.

AND THIS IS YOUR IDEA OF A JOB INTERVIEW?

AHEM

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'VE EVER HEARD OF THE BLACK TARANTULA, BUT THOSE HIJACKERS YOU INTERRUPTED ARE MEMBERS OF HIS CREW.

CAN YOU SUGGEST A BETTER WAY FOR ME TO DETERMINE IF YOU HAVE THE NECESSARY SKILLS AND DARING?

AT THAT VERY MOMENT, ON A YACHT MOORED ON THE ISLAND OF **EUBOEA**...

MISS MONGRAIN, WE ARE MEMBERS OF THE ***SECRET ORDERS OF SCRIERS,*** AND WE HAVE COME TO YOU AT THE REQUEST OF THE MAN YOU KNOW AS ***NORMAN OSBORN.***

YEAH... HE PHONED EARLIER... AND TOLD ME TO EXPECT YOU.

Mr. OSBORN ENTRUSTED YOU WITH SOMETHING OF VALUE.

CIRCUMSTANCES NOW DICTATE THAT YOU RELINQUISH IT TO US.

IS THERE ANY WAY I COULD ACCOMPANY YOU? I'VE GROWN RATHER ATTACHED TO --

MISS MONGRAIN --!

ONE DOES NOT QUESTION Mr. OSBORN. HE INSTRUCTED US TO COMPLIMENT YOU ON YOUR UNSWERVING DEDICATION --

-- AND HE HOPES YOU WILL BE PLEASED WITH THIS FINAL PAYMENT.

P-PLEASE, THANK HIM FOR ME.

I'LL GO GET THE --

HURRY! TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE!

WHAT ABOUT THIS ***YACHT?*** SHOULD I REMOVE MY THINGS AND PUT IT INTO DRY-DOCK SOMEWHERE?

CONSIDER IT A PARTING GIFT!

Mr. OSBORN TRULY HOPES YOU WILL ENJOY IT...

...FOR WHATEVER *MOMENTS* REMAIN TO YOU!

NO OFFENSE, LADY! I'VE READ ENOUGH TABLOIDS TO KNOW HOW YOU SUPER TYPES ENJOY A GOOD GRATUITOUS FIGHT --

-- BUT I MOSEYED OVER TO THE SPANDEX SIDE OF TOWN STRICTLY FOR THE MONEY!

IF YOU SURVIVE, YOU WILL HAVE AN UNLIMITED POTENTIAL FOR PROFIT!

SURVIVE?! HECK, I EXPECT TO MAKE THE ***ALL-STAR TEAM!***

*UNLESS DELILAH IS AN EVEN BETTER **ACTOR** THAN I AM, I'D SAY SHE HAS ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA WHO I REALLY AM!*

*I JUST HAVE TO REMEMBER TO MOVE A LITTLE **SLOWER** THAN USUAL, AND TO IGNORE MY **SPIDER-SENSE** --*

-- SO THAT SHE CAN SCORE AN OCCASIONAL SHOT, AND --

YOU'RE A LITTLE TOO Cocky FOR YOUR OWN GOOD, KID --

-- AND THAT COULD Cost YOU!

NO PROBLEM!

JUST TAKE IT OUT OF THOSE SO-CALLED UNLIMITED PROFITS!

THIS IS NO Game, BOUNCY BOY!

THE Black Tarantula IS NOT YOUR AVERAGE, MUSCLE-BOUND, SUPER-POWERED CRIMELORD.

HE IS VIRTUALLY Immortal, AND Unkillable!

Y-YOU *CAN'T* BE SERIOUS --!

Do I Look Like I'm Joking?!

NOPE!

WAM

BUT ANYONE CAN BE DECEIVED BY APPEARANCES!

MEANWHILE, SOMEWHERE ON STATEN ISLAND...

I GATHERED YOU BOTH TOGETHER SO THAT WE CAN MOVE BEYOND ALL PAST UNPLEASANTNESS...

... WE'RE ALL BUSINESSMEN, AND WE MUST NEVER ALLOW OUR EGOS TO INTERFERE WITH OUR PROFITS.

WITH ALL DUE TO RESPECT, ***DON FORTUNATO,*** THAT IS VERY EASY FOR YOU TO SAY.

YOU GRANTED THE ***BLACK TARANTULA*** PERMISSION TO OPERATE IN THIS CITY.

YOU'LL STILL GET YOUR CUT NO MATTER WHO CONTROLS ***HIJACKING.***

AT YOUR REQUEST, I ***SURRENDERED*** THAT PORTION OF MY OPERATION TO THE TARANTULA... BUT I EXPECT TO BE ***COMPENSATED.***

THE ROSE HAS A REASONABLE REQUEST.

HOW DO YOU PROPOSE TO SATISFY HIM?

IF IT WILL KEEP THE ***PEACE,*** I AM WILLING TO NEGOTIATE AN EQUITABLE FIGURE WHICH WILL BE PAID TO HIM ON A MONTHLY BASIS...

There Will Never Be Peace!

Not While The Black Tarantula Still Draws Breath!

I...I BELIEVE YOU, LADY... HONEST!

=WHEW=

AND, YET, I WAS AS HELPLESS AS A Newborn THE ONE TIME I FOUGHT THE BLACK TARANTULA!

MY INJURIES WERE SO EXTENSIVE THAT I SURELY WOULD HAVE Died --

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU UNDERSTAND EXACTLY What YOU'LL BE UP AGAINST.

I CAN CRUSH AN ARMORED TANK WITH MY BARE HANDS.

-- BUT, FOR REASONS WHICH STILL ELUDE ME... He Chose To Heal Me!

Y-YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY IMAGINE HOW DEGRADED I FELT.

WANNA BET --?

WHAT DO YOU SAY, PUNK... ...You Man Enough To Help Me Destroy The Black Tarantula?

DELILAH'S WILD CARD!

A KNOWN PSYCHOPATH WHO WOULDN'T STOP AT **MURDER!**

BUT SHE'S ALSO MY BEST SHOT AT DRAWING THAT MONSTER OUT OF HIDING!

I HAVE MY OWN REASONS FOR WANTING TO TAKE THE **BLACK TARANTULA** DOWN...

...CAN I REALLY PREVENT HER FROM KILLING HIM?

AM I EVEN SURE THAT I CAN STOP MYSELF?

EMPIRE STATE UNIVERSITY...

TOMORROW'S TEST WILL FOCUS ON THE WORK OF *Dr. ROBERT FREDERICKSON* --

-- SO I EXPECT EVERY-ONE TO BE PREPARED!

WE'LL BE READY, PROFESSOR CACHES.

SEE THAT YOU ARE, Mr. SLATTERY.

TERRIFIC LECTURE, MARINA... *AS USUAL!*

GLAD YOU ENJOYED IT, MARY JANE.

SHANTAL AND I ARE GOING FOR A QUICK CAFE LATTÉ. YOU INTERESTED?

SOUNDS GREAT, BUT IT WILL HAVE TO BE REAL QUICK. MY SON'S DAY-CARE LETS OUT IN AN HOUR.

Y-YOU NEVER MENTIONED A SON.

I... I GUESS I TEND TO BE SOMEWHAT SECRETIVE WHERE FABIAN IS CONCERNED.

HIS FATHER AND I HAD A RATHER BITTER BREAK-UP!

EUBOEA...

MIRA! MIRA!

ALLONS! ALLONS!

MAMA MIA!

THIS IS SO HORRIBLE, JOE!

SOME YACHT MUST HAVE A GAS LEAK OR SOMETHING!

I PRAY NO ONE WAS ABOARD...

WE SHOULD GO BACK TO THE HOTEL, MARTHA.

THERE ISN'T ANY-THING WE CAN DO HERE.

OF ALL THE BLASTED LUCK! THAT'S THE VERY BOAT I CAME TO INVESTIGATE.

IS IT ONLY COINCIDENCE THAT IT EXPLODED, OR DID OSBORN SOME-HOW -- ***EH?!***

LOOK! ***LOOK!*** THEY'RE PULLING A ***BODY*** FROM THE BAY!

IT'S THE WOMAN FROM THE YACHT!

FORTUNE MUST SMILE UPON HER!

SHE LIVES!

WELLLLL--?

YOU In OR Out?

IN.

HOW DID YOUR SURVEILLANCE GO, CHESBRO?

SHE FOLLOWS THE SAME DAILY SCHEDULE WITH ONLY MINOR VARIATIONS, MASTER.

HERE ARE THE PHOTOS YOU REQUESTED.

SHE IS STILL QUITE BEAUTIFUL, NO?

HOW WAS YOUR MEETING?

AS WELL AS COULD BE EXPECTED. ***FORTUNATO*** AND ***THE ROSE*** ARE FOOLS.

THEY LIVE ONLY TO CONDUCT ***BUSINESS,*** AND THINK THAT I AM AS ***SHORTSIGHTED*** AS THEY.

BUT A MAN WHO LOOKS DOWN THE ***CENTURIES*** KNOWS WHAT IS TRULY OF VALUE.

Hmmm... THESE OTHERS MAY PROVE USEFUL!

HER FIRST INCLINATION WILL, OF COURSE, BE TO ***RESIST*** ME.

BUT SHE MAY ***RELENT*** ONCE SHE UNDERSTANDS THAT SUCH DEFIANCE WILL MOST CERTAINLY PROVE ***FATAL*** TO HER FRIENDS.

CONTRARY TO THE BELIEF SHARED BY ***FORTUNATO*** AND THE ***ROSE,*** FINANCIAL PROFIT DID NOT LURE ME TO THE CITY...

...I CAME ON A MISSION OF VENGEANCE!

MARVEL COMICS

MAY
#91

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

WWW.MARVEL.COM

PETER PARKER SPIDER-MAN

MACKIE
ROMITA JR
HANNA

IDENTITY CRISIS!

HE WAS SPIDER-MAN...

...AND TODAY HE IS DUSK.

BUT NO MATTER WHAT NORMAN OSBORN, J.JONAHJAMESON OR LIFE THROWS AT HIM...

...HE WILL BE SPIDER-MAN AGAIN!

THE CONTINUING MENACE OF SPIDER-MAN IN THE DAILY B

WANTED

...IGHT 5'9"
...HT 160 lbs
...D ALIVE:
...0,000,00

UNDERCOVER

Howard Mackie, John Romita Jr., Scott Hanna
Story & Art
RS & Comicraft's Kiff Scholl
Letters
Gregory Wright
Colors
Ralph Macchio
Editor
Bob Harras
Editor in Chief

Stan Lee presents: PETER PARKER SPIDER-MAN

© 2017 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. WWW.MARVEL.COM

AS A FOG ROLLS ACROSS NEW YORK CITY...

...OUR STORY BEGINS.

PASTE POT PETE?

WHAT? YOU TRYING TO IRRITATE ME?

THEY CALL ME *THE TRAPSTER!*

YOU BONEHEADS ARE FROM THE *HAND*, RIGHT?

THE SECRET SOCIETY OF JAPANESE ASSASSINS.

I SHOULD HAVE FIGURED *HE* WOULDN'T WANT ME WALKING AROUND KNOWING WHAT I KNOW. SO YOU GUYS PICKED UP THE CONTRACT, Huh?

WELL, LET'S GET IT OVER WITH. THOUGH I'VE GOT TO TELL YOU...

I'VE RUN INTO A FEW OF YOU OVER THE YEARS.

CAN'T SAY I'VE EVER BEEN OVERLY IMPRESSED.

YOU WILL BE.

MINUTES LATER...

NICE TRY, GENTLEMEN.

AT THAT MOMENT...

NO... NOT THERE... IN THE BACK.

COME ON! I'M SUPPOSED TO MEET ARTHUR STACY IN FIVE MINUTES!

IF YOU WOULD STOP SQUIRMING AND HOLD STILL...

I THINK IT'S A SNAP.

OW!

SORRY, BUT I TOLD YOU TO HOLD STILL.

NOT THAT ONE... THE OTHER ONE.

FINE!

DO IT YOURSELF.

I WILL!

YOU KNOW, I'VE BEEN GETTING MYSELF DRESSED IN THE MORNING EVER SINCE I WAS A KID.

YOU ASKED!

DROP IT.

I'M LATE!

HOW DO I LOOK, MARY JANE?

WHAT *WAS* I THINKING?

FOUR IDENTITIES!

THIS IS RIDICULOUS! I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* MADE ME THINK THIS WOULD EVER WORK.

I'M GOING OUT AS SPIDER-MAN! IT'S *WHO I AM!*

COME ON, PETER...

...I WAS JUST KIDDING.

HA! HA! HA!

NO... REALLY! YOU LOOK TERRIFIC, *PETER!*

LIKE A GENUINE SUPER HERO!

ARE YOU FORGETTING ABOUT THE FIVE MILLION DOLLAR PRICE ***NORMAN OSBORN*** HAS PUT ON YOUR HEAD FOR THE MURDER OF THE JOEY Z. GUY?

OR MAYBE THAT ***EVERYBODY*** IN THE CITY IS WILLING TO FORGET ALL THE GOOD YOU'VE DONE FOR THE CHANCE TO COLLECT THE REWARD?

WE AGREED THAT DIFFERENT IDENTITIES WOULD ALLOW YOU TO CONTINUE TO DO GOOD WHILE FINDING THE REAL KILLER.

SORRY, ***MJ***, IT JUST DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT.

THIS IS WHO I AM.

IT'S WHO I'VE ALWAYS BEEN.

I'VE GOT TO DO WHAT FEELS RIGHT.

YOU UNDERSTAND.

NO... I DON'T.

I'M TOO ***YOUNG*** TO BE SPENDING ALL MY TIME WAITING BY A WINDOW WONDERING IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE KILLED BY THE NEXT SUPER-VILLAIN.

I KNOW THIS IS WHO YOU ARE... AND I RESPECT YOU FOR IT, BUT... I'M JUST TOO YOUNG.

I'M SORRY.

A SHORT TIME LATER AT CYPRUS HILLS CEMETERY...

CYPRESS HILLS

ARTHUR STACY, WORLD RENOWNED PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR, PRACTICES THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT SKILL OF HIS PROFESSION.

PATIENCE.

NASTY HABIT, ARTHUR. AND BESIDES...

THWAP

...IT MAKES ME SNEEZE.

AND YOU DON'T EVEN WANT TO THINK ABOUT WHAT IT'S LIKE TO SNEEZE WITH A MASK ON.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN ***THIS*** COSTUME? I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO ASSUME SOME OTHER GUISE.

DON'T YOU START ON ME TOO! I'VE BEEN GETTING A LOT OF THE *"YOU'RE A WALKING LOTTERY TICKET"* STUFF.

IT'S TRUE.

REST IN PIECE

NOT TO MENTION THE ENTIRE ***NYPD*** WOULD LIKE TO BRING YOU DOWN... JUST FOR THE HECK OF IT.

DETECTIVE SNIPES. I'M GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT.

ONLY OUT OF RESPECT FOR YOU AND YOUR BROTHER, SIR.

I'M UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THIS SITUATION, SO I'M GOING TO MAKE THIS QUICK.

THE LAB BOYS CONFIRM YOUR CLAIM, SPIDER-MAN. THE WEBBING YOU SUPPLIED ME WITH IS OF A DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT CHEMICAL COMPOSITION THAN THAT USED TO SUFFOCATE JOEY Z.

SOMEONE IS GOING THROUGH AN AWFUL LOT OF TROUBLE TO FRAME YOU. I KNOW IT, THE LAB KNOWS IT, AND THE MAYOR AND THE D.A. ***DON'T CARE.***

THEY WANT YOUR HEAD. THEY'RE GETTING PLENTY OF PRESSURE FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

OSBORN.

I CAN THINK OF ONLY ONE PERSON QUALIFIED TO MAKE AN ADHESIVE WHICH WOULD APPROXIMATE THE QUALITIES OF MY WEBBING... THE TRAPSTER.

YEAH, Mr. STACY MENTIONED YOU HAD YOUR SUSPICIONS. SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD ONE, BUT YOU'VE GOT ANOTHER PROBLEM.

SOMEONE HAS PUT A CONTRACT OUT ON THE TRAPSTER. NOTHING COMPARED TO YOURS, BUT ENOUGH TO MAKE HIM SWEAT IT.

WHOEVER SET HIM UP TO SET YOU UP... WANTS NO WITNESSES. HE DIES... AND ***ANY*** CHANCE OF YOU CLEARING YOUR NAME IS ***GONE.***

I KNOW YOU DIDN'T DO IT. THERE IS A PRICE ON YOUR HEAD... I'VE GOT A JOB TO DO. THE NEXT TIME I SEE YOU, MAN... I'M TAKING YOU IN.

GOODBYE, Mr. STACY. YOUR BROTHER, CAPTAIN STACY, HE WAS ONE OF THE FINEST COMMANDERS I'VE EVER HAD THE PLEASURE OF SERVING WITH.

I'LL FIND THE TRAPSTER AND I'LL ***MAKE*** HIM TALK! I'LL --

AND DO ***WHAT,*** SON?

THINK. HAVE YOU BENEFITED FROM ***ANY*** OF THE DIRECT CONFRONTATIONS YOU'VE HAD OF LATE?

THE ONE YOU HAD WITH OSBORN STARTED THIS WHOLE REWARD MESS.

GREAT! SO THE ONE GUY I NEED TO CLEAR MY NAME MAY SHOW UP ***DEAD.***

YES... IT IS GREAT. HE'S VULNERABLE, MAYBE EVEN A LITTLE SCARED... RIGHT NOW HE NEEDS A FRIEND TO HELP KEEP HIM ALIVE. A FRIEND HE CAN TALK TO, OPEN UP TO.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? HE'D NEVER TALK TO ME.

NO, BUT MAYBE TO SOMEONE WEARING A DIFFERENT MASK?

YOU'RE REALLY NOT GIVING ME MUCH OF A CHOICE, ARTHUR.

IT'S OSBORN WHO STEALS CHOICES.

LATER THAT EVENING, AT THE EMPIRE STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY...

...WHILE PETER WORKS FEVERISHLY ON A MUCH NEGLECTED RESEARCH PROJECT, MARY JANE AND **JILL STACY** CRAM FOR UPCOMING MID TERMS.

ER... MARY JANE?

Uh-Huh.

CAN WE TALK?

WHATEVER.

I THINK I NEED TO HIT THE REFERENCE STACKS FOR... Er... SOME... REFERENCE!

JILL LOOKS LIKE SHE'S RECOVERED FROM HER WOUNDS.

SURE DOES.

I FEEL BADLY THAT IT HAPPENED AT OUR HOUSE. IT HAD TO BE NORMAN.

THINGS HAPPEN.

ESPECIALLY TO US.

COME ON, MJ. STOP GIVING ME THE COLD SHOULDER. THIS ISN'T LIKE US. WE'VE ***ALWAYS*** BEEN ABLE TO TALK.

WOULD YOU ACCEPT A HEARTFELT APOLOGY ***IF*** I ALLOWED YOU TO SAY...I TOLD YOU SO?

PETER, I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS CONVERSATION RIGHT NOW.

YOU MAY BE THE BOY GENIUS, WHO CAN MANAGE TO SAVE THE WORLD IN HIS SPARE TIME, BUT I'VE STILL GOT TO STRUGGLE TO PASS EXAMS.

I DON'T KNOW IF I'D SAY ***GENIUS*** --

I'M ***NOT*** KIDDING, PETER. WE BOTH KNOW THAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO WHATEVER YOU WANT TO DO ANYWAY.

SAVING THE WORLD, GETTING REVENGE ON A LIFE LONG ENEMY, TRAVELING TO ALIEN DIMENSIONS...I KNOW ALL THESE THINGS ARE IMPORTANT, BUT... WE'VE ALSO GOT REAL LIVES.

AND I'VE GOT AN ABNORMAL PSYCH CLASS EXAM TO PASS. AS A MATTER OF FACT...MAYBE ***YOU'D*** LIKE TO BE THE SUBJECT OF MY TERM PAPER?

OUCH!

I THINK THAT'S MORE THAN ENOUGH TALK FOR NOW.

A SHORT TIME LATER...

YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT TO CATCH A RIDE WITH US, MJ?

RIGHT AFTER MY DAD AND I MEET FOR DINNER, WE'RE HEADING BACK TO QUEENS.

THANKS, JILL, BUT I'M GOING TO HANG AROUND FOR A LITTLE WHILE AND SEE IF PETER SHOWS UP. HE SAID HE WAS JUST GOING OUT FOR COFFEE.

OKAY. SEE YA TOMORROW.

YEAH...I'LL WAIT FOR PETER.

DAY AFTER DAY. NIGHT AFTER NIGHT.

WAIT WHILE YOU GO OFF TO FIGHT THE LATEST COSTUMED VILLAIN. WAIT WHILE THE FOG ROLLS IN. WAIT UNTIL I'M OLD AND --

-- NOT!

I'M OUT OF HERE -- *Ooph!*

GOTCHA!

I REALLY *AM* SORRY.

Mmmph...

PETER! I --

FORGIVE ME? PLEASE?

OF COURSE I DO.

IT'S JUST...IT'S ***ALL*** STARTING TO GET TO ME.

IT'S SCHOOL, THE BOUNTY ON YOUR HEAD, NORMAN... EVERYTHING.

AND ***THIS*** COSTUME IN PARTICULAR IS STRESSING ME OUT.

I KEEP REMEMBERING THE ***LAST*** TIME YOU BROUGHT AN ***ALIEN*** COSTUME BACK FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION! DOES THE NAME ***VENOM*** RING A BELL?

I -- Er, ***HI!*** JUST PRACTICING FOR A SCHOOL PLAY! SEE YOU AROUND!

WILL YOU TURN OFF THE INVISIBLE BUTTON OR SOMETHING, PETER! YOU KEEP FADING IN AND OUT OF THE FOG -- AND PEOPLE ARE LOOKING!

COOL... Huh?

YEAH... SURE... IT MUST BE A GUY THING.

SOMETIMES I THINK IT WOULD JUST BE BETTER IF I DIDN'T KNOW... ABOUT THE SECRET IDENTITIES, THE CRIME FIGHTING... IT WOULD ALL JUST BE SIMPLER.

DON'T WORRY, MJ, I'VE GOT IT UNDER CONTROL. I THINK THIS MIGHT WORK OUT.

NORMAN OSBORN IS ***NOT*** GOING TO WIN THIS TIME.

SO YOU'RE TELLING ME I HAVE NO CHOICE?

NOT REALLY.

THEN, PETER, NORMAN OSBORN HAS ALREADY ***WON!***

AT THAT MOMENT, AS THE FOG ROLLS ACROSS TIMES SQUARE...

...PETER PETRUSKI CONTEMPLATES HIS LIFE.

EARLY ON HE SHOWED PROMISE AS A RESEARCH SCIENTIST FOR A MAJOR CORPORATION.

THE PATENT ON THE MULTI-POLYMER ADHESIVE HE FORMULATED COULD HAVE PROVEN QUITE PROFITABLE AND ROCKETED HIM TO THE HEAD OF HIS CHOSEN PROFESSION.

INSTEAD, PETRUSKI CHOSE A DIFFERENT CAREER TRACK.

FIRST AS PASTE POT PETE, AND LATER AS THE TRAPSTER...

...HE SOON FOUND HIMSELF TRAPPED WITHIN A YOUNG MAN'S DELUSIONS OF WHAT THE LIFE OF A SUPER-VILLAIN WOULD BE.

TRAPPED UNTIL THIS VERY DAY.

TRAPPED?

JOES

WHO TRAPS THE TRAPSTER?

NO ONE.

NO --

Ooph!

WHAT THE --?

COME WITH ME IF YOU WANT TO LIVE.

YOU *THREATENING* ME?!

EXCUSE ME? DO YOU HAVE GLUE IN YOUR EARS?

I SAID --

I DON'T *CARE* WHAT YOU SAID!

YOU *TOUCHED* ME...

...YOU DIE!

NOW YOU'RE TALKING TO YOURSELF.

LISTEN TO ME! I'LL TRY TO MAKE THIS REAL SIMPLE...

WHERE'D YOU GO?

YOU BEEN INHALING THAT GLUE WAY TOO LONG, PETEY!

FRA KOOM

...GET DOWN!

YOU?

YOU'RE WORKING FOR HIM NOW?

THAT'S RIGHT, PAL, ME... ***THE SHOCKER***... IN THE FLESH!

AND YOU DON'T STAND A CHANCE.

LOOK AT THE REST OF THEM DOWN THERE. THEY KNOW ENOUGH TO GET LOST WHEN I SHOW UP.

THEY'VE LEARNED NOT TO LAUGH AT ME ANYMORE.

BUT I'VE GOT TO TELL YOU SOMETHING...

... YOU GOT ONE THING WRONG. I'M WORKING FOR NO ONE BUT MYSELF ON THIS ONE.

THERE'S AN OPEN CONTRACT ON YOU THAT, NOW THAT SPIDER-MAN HAS PULLED A DISAPPEARING ACT, MAKES YOU THE NUMBER ONE LOTTERY TICKET IN TOWN.

GUESS YOU PULLED ONE JOB TOO MANY RECENTLY. WHOEVER YOU WERE WORKING FOR WANTS TO MAKE SURE EVERYTHING IS NICE AND CLEAN.

AND, AS YOU KNOW, I'LL DO ***ANYTHING*** FOR A BUCK!

GOOD-BYE, LOSER--

THIS FROM A MAN WHO DRESSES IN A QUILT?

OOLPH!

WHOA!

FRAKOOM

WHO ARE YOU?

ACTUALLY... I DON'T CARE!

FOR THAT ONE I'M GOING TO KILL YOU FOR NOTHING.

AND NEVER BOTHER ASKING YOUR NAME.

ACTUALLY...

...IT'S DUSK.

YOU JUST SAVED MY LIFE.

NOW I OWE YOU ONE.

I HATE THAT.

SORRY.

SHUT UP.

I'M TRYING TO SAVE BOTH OUR TAILS NOW.

THEN, AFTER WE'RE EVEN, I MIGHT KILL YOU MYSELF.

NICE WALL CRAWLING. HOW DO YOU DO THAT?

WITH SMALL AMOUNTS OF ADHESIVE AND SOLVENT RELEASED FROM MY GLOVES AND BOOTS SO THAT --

-- SHUT UP...

FRAKOOM!

...AND RUN!

FRAKOOM

YOU KNOW...

...THIS IS ONE OF THOSE GIANT COMPUTER SCREEN BILLBOARDS, RIGHT?

YEAH? SO?

WELL, I'M THINKING THAT GIVEN THE NATURE OF SHOCKER'S POWERS AND ALL...

...THIS MIGHT HAVE BEEN A *BIG* MISTAKE.

FRAKOOM

HI THERE!

DO ME A FAVOR, TRAP...

...EAT *GLASS!*

KRASH

18

THIS IS THE BEST YOU'VE GOT TO THROW AT ME?

LIKE I COULDN'T TAKE CARE OF *THIS!*

SHOOT! USED UP ALL MY GLUE RESERVES.

DUSK! IF YOU WANT TO GIVE ME A HAND...

...I WOULDN'T MIND OWING YOU ONE MORE.

DUSK?

LOOKS LIKE YOUR BUDDY WISED UP AND TOOK OFF.

TOO BAD FOR YOU.

YOU KNOW --

SAVE THE SPEECH AND JUST GET IT OVER WITH, WILL YA?

COME ON, PETE, WHY SO GLUM?

OOPH!

YOU GOT TO LOVE THE GUYS WHO GO IN FOR THE BIG OLD SPEECHES.

IT GIVES YOU TIME TO DO *THIS!*

WHERE'D YOU GO?

YOU ARE REALLY STARTING TO TEE ME OFF.

YOU'RE MAKING ME LOOK FOOLISH.

I DON'T LIKE THAT.

I'VE BEEN WORKING REAL HARD ON RESTORING A SOMEWHAT TARNISHED REP AND I CERTAINLY DON'T NEED SOME WANNABE SCREWING AROUND WITH ME.

SO COME HERE.

I WANNA TALK TO YOU UP CLOSE.

REAL CLOSE.

I GOT SOMETHING FOR YOU!

AND DON'T WORRY, TRAPSTER...

...I'VE GOT PLENTY LEFT FOR YOU.

YOU REALLY DO RUN OFF AT THE MOUTH... DON'T YOU?

MAYBE IF YOU DID A LITTLE LESS TALKING...

...YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO WORK SO HARD ON RESTORING YOUR REP.

PERSONALLY... I'VE NEVER HAD SUCH A PROBLEM...

YOU *ARE* A DEAD MAN.

WHEN I'M DONE WITH YOU, THEY'RE GOING TO BE ABLE TO PACK WHAT'S LEFT OF YOUR BODY IN A MILK CONTAINER.

STOP!

YOU'RE SCARING ME!

NICE GOING, BUDDY.

NOW I'LL FINISH HIM OFF.

GOING TO GLUE THE VALVES OF HIS HEART SHUT AND THEN...

...I'M GOING TO ***HURT*** HIM.

LET IT GO.

HE'S DOWN AND THE COPS ARE ALMOST HERE.

LET'S TAKE OFF.

WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU REALLY WANT?

I'M SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN RAKED OVER BY NORMAN OSBORN JUST LIKE YOU.

I WANT TO GET EVEN.

SOUNDS GOOD TO ME.

LET'S DO IT.

WHAT AM I DOING?

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE.

MARVEL COMICS

MAY
#257

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

WWW.MARVEL.COM

DEMATTEIS
ROSS
GREEN
MILGROM

THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN®

IDENTITY CRISIS!

THE ROOF OF MANHATTAN'S MOST CELEBRATED HOTEL, "THE TOP OF NEW YORK"...

...THIS WAY, AMBASSADOR!

-- COMMENT ON YOUR MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT --

-- ANY HINTS ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO SAY TO THE UNITED NATIONS TODAY...?

...WHERE AMBASSADOR **HAZRAM CHALIZ**, OF THE EASTERN KINGDOM OF SUFIND, THREADS HIS WAY THROUGH A SWARM OF MEDIA PREDATORS.

CHALIZ AND HIS WIFE, **SHANAZ**, NOD CALMLY TO THE ASSEMBLED REPORTERS -- NEITHER DISTURBED BY NOR INTERESTED IN THEIR BABBLE.

BUT WHEN THEY REACH THEIR WAITING HELICOPTER...

...THE COUPLE'S BUDDHA-LIKE POISE IS RUDELY SHATTERED.

NOT A ***MOVE***, Mr. AMBASSADOR --

-- OR THEY'RE GONNA BE PICKING PIECES OF YOUR HEAD OFF THIS ROOF FOR ***MONTHS!***

PUT THE GUN DOWN. ***NOW.***

TAURUS

WE'VE GOT YOU SURROUNDED, OUTNUMBERED, AND ***OUT-GUNNED.***

WE ARE THE ARMY OF ***CONUNDRUM*** --

Uh... ***JEFF!***

I WOULDN'T BE SO ***SURE*** OF THAT.

-- AND WE CLAIM THE AMBASSADOR AND HIS WIFE AS OUR ***POLITICAL PRISONERS!***

RESIST -- AND EVERY PERSON HERE WILL DIE!

© 2017 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. WWW.MARVEL.COM

INSIDE, CHALIZ --

-- CONUNDRUM HIMSELF IS WAITING TO HAVE A LITTLE TALK WITH YOU!

TAKE ME IF YOU MUST -- BUT LET MY WIFE GO!

SHE HAS DONE NOTHING TO --

HAZRAMI!

DO NOT SPEAK --

KAK

--UNLESS SPOKEN TO!

I TRUST I'VE MADE MYSELF --

-- CLEAR..?

KLIK

YOU ARE DOGS --

-- LESS- THAN DOGS --

-- AND YOU WILL NOT GET AWAY WITH THIS!

WE ALREADY HAVE!

TAKE THEM... BROTHER --

IN THE NAME OF THE IMMORTAL CONUNDRUM!

--LEADER..?!

SOMETHING'S WRONG!

IT'S AS IF SOME -- UNSEEN FORCE IS PULLING US DOWN!

HOLDING US BACK!

ALL GLORIES TO THE CAUSE! ALL GLORIES TO OUR --

A FORCE I MAY BE --

PRODIGY

Stan Lee presents: Spectacular Spider-Man

EXITING WRITER JOHN MARC DEMATTEIS WOULD LIKE TO THANK: LUKE ROSS PENCILS AL MILGROM, AND DAN GREEN, INKS RS & COMICRAFT'S KS, LETTERS JOHN KALISZ, COLORS THE ESTIMABLE RALPH MACCHIO, EDITOR AND BOB HARRAS, CHIEF FOR ANOTHER MEMORABLE RIDE IN THE SPIDER-MOBILE!

-- BUT YOU COULD HARDLY SAY I'M -- UNSEEN!

HE -- HE JUST CAME OUTTA *NOWHERE!*

TOOK THOSE TERRORISTS DOWN WITHOUT WORKING UP A *SWEAT!*

THAT'S IT! HOLD THAT POSE FOR *UNCLE BILLY!*

LOOKIT THE WAY HE'S GOT HOLD OF THAT *COPTER!* YOU GET THE FEELING HE COULD PROBABLY -- SNAP IT IN *HALF* WITHOUT *TRYING!*

BUT -- WHO *IS* HE?

I -- I THINK IT'S THAT NEW HERO EVERYONE'S BEEN TALKING ABOUT --

DON'T WASTE YOUR **BULLETS**, GENTLEMEN --

SPING SPAK TNG

-- BECAUSE ALL THEY'RE GOING TO DO --

-- IS ANNOY ME!

AND NOW --

-- **EVERYBODY OUT!**

WUDD

RAYNA -- MY BELOVED **WIFE** --!

DON'T WORRY, Mr. AND Mrs. AMBASSADOR --

-- YOU'RE IN **GOOD HANDS** --

AEEEE!

WANG

-- WITH **PRODIGY!**

I HOPE THAT THIS DOESN'T LEAVE YOU WITH A **BAD IMPRESSION** OF OUR GREAT **COUNTRY!**

BELIEVE ME -- FOR EVERY GUN-WIELDING LUNATIC -- THERE ARE **HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS** OF GOOD AND DECENT CITIZENS --

-- WHO **ABHOR** THE VIOLENCE AND LUNACY THAT THESE WRETCHED MEN REPRESENT!

COOL! HE DROPPED THE COPTER AND CAUGHT THEM BOTH BEFORE THEY COULD HIT THE ROOF!

THERE'VE BEEN REPORTS ABOUT PRODIGY FOR A **WEEK** NOW -- BUT WHO'DA THOUGHT **I'D** ACTUALLY END UP GETTING ONE OF THE VERY FIRST **PHOTOS** OF HIM!

WHEN **Mr. JAMESON** GAVE ME THIS ASSIGNMENT, I THOUGHT IT WAS GONNA BE A TOTAL **SNORE** --

"-- BUT THIS MAY BE JUST THE THING TO KICK-START ***BILLY WALTERS'*** CAREER AT THE ***DAILY BUGLE!***

"IN A MATTER OF MINUTES, THE ***POLICE*** ARRIVE, TO TAKE THE SUBDUED TERRORISTS INTO CUSTODY...

"...WHILE AMBASSADOR CHALIZ -- UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF THE MEDIA -- APPROACHES HIS SUPER-HUMAN ***SAVIOR...***"

WE HAVE A SAYING IN MY COUNTRY: "SAVE A MAN'S LIFE -- AND HIS ***KINGDOM*** BECOMES ***YOURS.***"

WHAT CAN I ***GIVE*** YOU, MY MASKED FRIEND -- TO EXPRESS MY ETERNAL THANKS FOR ALL YOU HAVE DONE HERE TODAY?

NO THANKS ***NECESSARY.*** I DON'T DO THIS FOR PRAISE OR REWARDS.

KNOWING THAT I SERVE THE PEOPLE OF THIS GRAND AND GLORIOUS CITY --

-- IS ALL THE THANKS I'LL ***EVER*** NEED!

WAIT!

YES, YOUNG MAN?

YOU CAN'T JUST RUN OFF -- WITHOUT TELLIN' US SOMETHING ***ABOUT*** YOUR-SELF!

WHO ***ARE*** YOU, PRODIGY? WHERE DID YOU ***COME*** FROM? WHY ARE YOU --

WELL, LI'L BUDDY, LET'S JUST SAY THAT I'M A REGULAR FELLA WITH POWERS THAT ***MOST*** REGULAR FELLAS DON'T HAVE.

AND I INTEND TO ***USE*** THOSE POWERS TO ***HELP*** PEOPLE --

-- WHENEVER AND WHEREVER I CAN!

AND NOW... I DON'T MEAN TO BE ***RUDE*** --

-- BUT I THINK IT'S TIME I *CONTINUED MY PATROL!*

EVIL NEVER RESTS -- AND NEITHER DOES --

RODGY!

TOP OF NEWYORK

TOP OF NEWYORK

NOW *THAT* --

-- IS WHAT A HERO'S *SUPPOSED* TO BE?

I WONDER IF HE'S LOOKING FOR A *SIDEKICK?*

DAILY BUGLE
NEW YORK'S FINEST DAILY NEWSPAPER
NEW HERO SA
SUFINDIAN AMBASSA
PRODIGY NAILS TERROR
EXCLUSIVE BY ROBERT BEAUMONT
PHOTO OF PRODIGY BY BILLY WALTERS
WHO IS CONUNDRUM?
...Y'KNOW, WALTERS --
THE DAILY BUGLE. LATER.
-- I SENT YOU OVER TO GET THE AMBASSADOR BECAUSE MOST OF MY REGULAR PHOTOGRAPHERS WERE ON ***OTHER ASSIGNMENTS*** --
-- TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I THOUGHT A ***MONKEY*** COULD'VE COVERED THIS, IT WASN'T A BIG DEAL --
-- BUT WHEN IT ***BECAME*** A BIG DEAL -- YOU REALLY ***DELIVERED!***
GOD -- LOOK AT THE ***LIGHT*** GLINTING OFF HIS ARMOR! IT'S ***BEAUTIFUL!***
I ***AGREE***, JONAH! WILLIAM'S GOT THE POTENTIAL TO BE A TERRIFIC REPORTER ***AND*** A TOP PHOTOGRAPHER!
WE REALLY HIT THE ***MOTHER LODE*** WHEN WE HIRED THIS BOY ON!
THANKS, ***Mr. OSBORN***... BUT, REALLY, TAKING PICTURES ISN'T MY ***THING***. AND MOST OF WHAT I KNOW I PICKED UP FROM ***PETER PARKER!*** I MEAN, THE GUY'S A GENIUS WHEN IT COMES TO --
LET ME GIVE YOU SOME ***ADVICE***, SON. HUMILITY IS A WASTE OF TIME. KNOW YOUR STRENGTHS --
-- AND ***EXPLOIT*** THEM WITHOUT ***EXCUSES***.
NOW COME INTO MY OFFICE -- I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THIS ***PRODIGY***.
THE SUFINDIAN AMBASSADOR IS AN ***OLD FRIEND*** OF MINE. PRODIGY SAVED HAZRAM'S LIFE -- AND I WANT TO FIND HIM... ***THANK*** HIM --
-- ***AND*** WITH A LITTLE LUCK -- FIND SOME WAY TO USE HIM AGAINST ***SPIDER-MAN!***
IT'S A LITTLE ***PECULIAR***, DON'T YOU THINK, NORMAN -- THAT PRODIGY, ***RICOCHET***, ***DUSK*** AND ***HORNET*** HAVE ALL POPPED UP AT THE SAME TIME?
NO MORE PECULIAR THAN WHEN THE ***FANTASTIC FOUR***, ***SPIDER-MAN***, ***DAREDEVIL***, ***THOR*** AND SO MANY OTHERS MADE THEIR FIRST APPEARANCES A FEW YEARS BACK.
MAYBE THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF THE ***NEXT WAVE*** --

COME ALONG, *M'BOY* -- LET'S HAVE A LITTLE CHAT ABOUT *PRODIGY* --

-- AND ABOUT YOUR *FUTURE* WITH *MY NEWSPAPER!*

MIND IF I *JOIN* YOU?

YES, ACTUALLY.

WAY T'*GO,* BILL!

THANKS, *FLASH!*

I THINK!

...*GUESS WHO?*

COURTNEY LOVE?

MUCH CUTER!

KATE WINSLET?

FAR MORE SOPHISTICATED!

FIONNA APPLE?

SLIGHTLY OLDER!

BETTY BRANT -- LOVE OF MY LIFE?

EXACTLY!

HOW'RE YOU DOING, GORGEOUS?

MUCH BETTER --

-- NOW THAT I'M HERE WITH *YOU.*

WE STILL ON FOR TONIGHT?

DINNER AND "*LES MIZ*"? WOULDN'T MISS IT FOR THE WORLD!

GOTTA GET BACK TO WORK, HANDSOME! THIS PAPER GRINDS TO A HALT WITHOUT ITS *STAR REPROTER!*

SEE YOU LATER!

A GREAT *JOB* AS NORMAN OSBORN'S ASSISTANT...A GREAT *WOMAN* LIKE BETTY... HAVEN'T HAD A DRINK IN OVER A *MONTH* --

-- LIFE JUST DOESN'T GET ANY *BETTER* THAN *THIS!*

SOMEWHERE IN THE CITY...

...THERE WALKS A LIVING MYSTERY.

A HUMAN ENIGMA -- NAMED CONUNDRUM.

FOR HOURS NOW, HE HAS KNELT IN MEDITATION AND PRAYER, SEEKING THE INNER GUIDANCE OF HIS LONG-DEAD MASTER...

...SEEKING, TOO, THE WISDOM AND COURAGE TO PROCEED WITH HIS PLANS.

WHAT TO DO NEXT? HE MUSES.

HE FINDS HIS ANSWER IN THE PIECES OF A JIGSAW PUZZLE.

PUZZLE

01 PIECES

BLANK PIECES -- WHEN HE FIRST LAYS THEM OUT ON THE TABLE.

BUT, AS CONUNDRUM CONCENTRATES -- AN IMAGE APPEARS: A GLITTERING RUBY, HELD IN A FINELY SCULPTED HAND.

HE NODS, SATISFIED, THEN TURNS HIS GAZE TO THE MIRROR...

...TO HIMSELF...

...AND WONDERS -- AS HE HAS EVERY DAY FOR MORE YEARS THAN HE CAN REMEMBER:

WHO AM I?

WHAT LIES BENEATH THIS SHIFTING FACE... BENEATH THE RIDDLES THAT ARE MY THOUGHTS?

DID THE MAN I WAS BEFORE THE MASTER FOUND ME HAVE A NAME, A FAMILY? DID HE HAVE PASSIONS AND WEAKNESSES?

BUT THE ONLY ANSWER HE RECEIVES IS THIS: **YOU ARE CONUNDRUM NOW. THAT IS ENOUGH.**

AND IT IS.

WITH AN ALMOST-GIRLISH GIGGLE HE THROWS THE SWITCH...

...AND THE CAGE DESCENDS.

Ah -- THE CHARMING DAUGHTER OF THE AMBASSADOR!

HOW ARE YOU -- MY DEAR TABRIAZ?

TO THINK THAT -- WHILE MY MEN WERE MAKING THEIR ATTEMPT ON YOUR FATHER'S LIFE -- WHICH WAS NEVER **INTENDED** TO SUCCEED --

-- I WAS **PERSONALLY** BREACHING THE SUFINDIAN EMBASSY --

-- TO CLAIM **THIS** PRECIOUS GEM!

WHAT -- WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO **DO** TO ME?

I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT YOUR HEALTH OR SAFETY, MY DEAR... **TOO** MUCH.

ALL YOUR FATHER NEEDS TO DO TO INSURE YOUR RETURN -- IS GIVE ME THE FABLED **HAND.**

OF COURSE, IF HE DOESN'T --

-- WELL --

-- I MIGHT HAVE TO TAKE **YOUR** HAND --

-- AND **MAIL** IT TO HIM --

-- FOLLOWED BY **OTHER** SEVERED BODY PARTS!

HA

HA HEEEEE

FOREST HILLS, QUEENS...

...WHERE AN ARMORED FIGURE STREAKS, UNNOTICED, INTO AN ALLEY WITH AN ALMOST PRETERNATURAL GRACE.

PRODIGY HAS COME HOME...

...AND SO HAS PETER PARKER!

IS THIS FUN -- OR WHAT?!

BEING PRODIGY-- IS LIKE FINALLY BECOMING THE KIND OF HERO I FANTASIZED ABOUT BEING WHEN I WAS A LITTLE KID --

-- READING UNCLE BEN'S OLD COMIC BOOKS!

SO WHAT IF THIS FAKE NOSE --

SKITCH

-- NEARLY TAKES MY SKIN WITH IT EVERY TIME I YANK IT OFF? SO WHAT IF THIS GOLD FACE PAINT GIVES ME A RASH?

IT'S WORTH IT! AND IT COMES OFF EASILY.

PRODIGY'S SQUARE-JAWED, DECENT, UNCOMPLICATED --

-- AND EVERYONE SEEMS TO LOVE HIM!

TOO BAD I HAD TO ASSUME THIS IDENTITY BECAUSE A FIVE MILLION DOLLAR BOUNTY ON SPIDEY'S HEAD FOR MURDER MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO APPEAR AS THE WEB-SPINNER.

I THINK PEOPLE REALLY WANT AN OLD-FASHIONED GOOD GUY THEY CAN CALL THEIR OWN! AND, AFTER YEARS OF BEING THE PROTOTYPE FOR THE NEUROTIC SUPER HERO --

-- SO DO I!

GETTING INTO THE PRODIGY COSTUME -- PLAYING THE PART OF A HERO SO SQUARE HE MAKES CAPTAIN AMERICA SEEM A RADICAL --

-- IS A TOTAL BLAST!

HE REPRESENTS EVERYTHING I'VE EVER TRIED TO BE IN MY LIFE: SOMEONE WHO ALWAYS DOES THE RIGHT THING -- NO MATTER WHAT!

BUT -- UNLIKE PETER PARKER -- PRODIGY DOESN'T MAKE MISTAKES! HE ISN'T TORTURED BY CONFUSION, GUILT, AND SELF-DOUBT!

WEIRD, ISN'T IT? I'M ALREADY THINKING OF PRODIGY -- OF ALL MY NEW IDENTITIES -- AS SOMEHOW SEPARATE FROM ME --

-- AS IF THEY'VE TAKEN ON LIVES OF THEIR OWN!

I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD BE DELIGHTED BY THAT -- OR WORRIED!

THERE I GO AGAIN -- ANALYZING EVERYTHING!

WELL... ENOUGH! JUST THIS ONCE I'M GOING TO TRY MY BEST TO KICK BACK, RELAX --

-- AND ENJOY MYS --

WHOOPS!

SORRY, MISS! GUESS I WAS SO LOST IN THOUGHT I WASN'T LOOKING WHERE I WAS --

-- GOING --?

AUNT ANNA!

PETER!

I... ah WELL Um --

TOOK THE WORDS RIGHT OUT OF MY MOUTH!

HERE -- LEMME GRAB THAT CART FOR YOU --

YOU GO TO ALL THE TROUBLE OF SHOPPING FOR US... THE LEAST I CAN DO IS HELP YOU HOME WITH THE GROCERIES!

PETER -- HOW CAN YOU BE SO... PLEASANT TO ME? SO CHEERFUL?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

Oh, I THINK YOU KNOW.

I WOULDN'T BLAME YOU IF YOU THREW ME OUT OF THE HOUSE AND NEVER SPOKE TO ME AGAIN!

HERE YOU ARE WORKING AT THE NEWSPAPER... GOING TO SCHOOL... TRYING TO BE A GOOD HUSBAND -- AND I TRY AND TURN YOU INTO SOME... MANIPULATIVE VILLAIN!

YOUR AUNT MAY WAS MY CLOSEST FRIEND IN THE WORLD. I'VE KNOWN YOU SINCE YOU WERE A LITTLE BOY.

THE OTHER NIGHT -- I PRACTICALLY BIT YOUR HEAD OFF! SHRIEKING AT YOU LIKE SOME -- SOME FISHMONGER!

ACCUSING YOU OF BEING UNFAITHFUL TO MARY JANE!

ANNA -- IT'S NO BIG DEAL.

YES IT IS!

YOU'RE AS KIND AND DECENT A MAN AS YOUR UNCLE BEN WAS -- AND I AM SO DISGUSTED WITH MYSELF FOR --

... FOR ...

WHY -- WHY DON'T WE SIT *DOWN* FOR A MINUTE AND --

YOU KNOW -- A WOMAN GETS TO BE A CERTAIN *AGE* AND EVERYONE THINKS OF HER AS A *"SWEET OLD LADY."*

AS IF WE WERE NEVER *YOUNG.* AS IF WE NEVER HAD *DREAMS* AND *DESIRES.* AS IF WE NEVER -- *MADE MISTAKES.*

I *HAD* MY SHARE OF DREAMS -- AND I MADE *MORE* THAN MY SHARE OF *MISTAKES.*

I... I WAS *MARRIED,* PETER, WHEN I WAS VERY YOUNG.

I DIDN'T *KNOW* --

I'D MOVED OUT TO CALIFORNIA -- BECAUSE I WANTED TO BE AN *ACTRESS.* CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? *ME?*

GUESS IT RUNS IN THE *FAMILY.*

I MET A MAN. WE FELL IN LOVE. AND WE GOT MARRIED. *MUCH* TOO QUICKLY. IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE *JACOB* AND I...

THAT WAS HIS *NAME:* JACOB *HILLIARD.* HE WAS A *RADIO WRITER...*

... IN THE DAYS WHEN RADIO DRAMA WAS *DYING.*

ANYWAY, IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE JACOB AND I DISCOVERED THAT THE FLUSH OF FIRST LOVE HAD *FADED* --

-- AND THERE WAS PRECIOUS LITTLE *LEFT.*

"BUT WE WERE *SO YOUNG!* I WAS *NINETEEN,* FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE! AND WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

"I WAS AT AN *AUDITION* ONE DAY WHEN I MET *JOHNNY DIPALMA.*

HE WAS A *SINGER.* A *SINATRA WANNABE,* I GUESS YOU'D CALL HIM TODAY. SANG ON COMMERCIALS. PLAYED THE CLUBS AROUND TOWN.

"WELL, JOHNNY ASKED ME TO LUNCH. I KNEW I SHOULDN'T -- BUT HE WAS SO CHARMING. SO FULL OF LIFE. HE WAS -- EVERYTHING JACOB *WASN'T.*

"IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE I FELL IN LOVE WITH HIM. OR AT LEAST I *CONVINCED* MYSELF THAT I HAD.

"I STARTED *LYING* TO HILLIARD, TELLING HIM I WAS GOING ON AUDITIONS... OR OUT WITH THE GIRLS -- WHEN WHAT I WAS *REALLY* DOING --"

-- WAS MEETING JOHNNY. THE GUILT -- THE GUILT EVENTUALLY *ATE ME UP.* I COULDN'T GO ON *LYING.*

SO I TOLD JACOB THE *TRUTH.* THEN I TOLD JOHNNY I COULDN'T *SEE* HIM ANY MORE. AND *THEN* --

THEN I GOT ON THE NEXT FLIGHT *HOME.*

Oh, PETER, HOW I *LOATHED* MYSELF. JUST WANTED TO CRAWL INTO A *HOLE* -- AND NEVER COME *OUT* AGAIN.

BUT THANK THE LORD I HAD FRIENDS LIKE YOUR AUNT AND UNCLE TO COME HOME TO. THEY MADE ME FEEL *WELCOME.* THEY LOVED ME... TOOK *CARE* OF ME.

EVERYONE THOUGHT I'D HAD SOME KIND OF *NERVOUS BREAKDOWN* OUT THERE.

THAT BIG BAD HOLLYWOOD HAD *CRUSHED* ME.

I COULD NEVER TELL *ANYONE* THE TRUTH, NOT EVEN MAY.

AND THAT'S WHY YOU THOUGHT THAT *I* --?

IT REMINDED ME SO MUCH OF THE WAY *I* WAS -- DURING THOSE SHAMEFUL DAYS, THAT I JUST --

I UNDERSTAND.

THEN -- YOU DON'T HATE ME?

HATE YOU?

I LOVE YOU, AUNT ANNA --

-- AND I ALWAYS WILL.

THE EXHIBIT IS CALLED "THE WONDERS OF ANCIENT SUFIND"...

...AND IT HAS BEEN DRAWING RECORD CROWDS TO THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM SINCE IT DEBUTED.

AND OF ALL THE ARTIFACTS ON DISPLAY HERE -- ON LOAN, FOR TWO MONTHS, FROM THE PEOPLE OF SUFIND -- NONE HAS INSPIRED MORE AWE, WONDER, AND REVERENCE...

...THAN THE FABLED HAND OF MUMTHAZI.

THIS PRICELESS RUBY IS SAID TO HAVE BELONGED TO MUMTHAZI THE FIRST, LORD OF THE SUFINDIAN EMPIRES, MORE THAN A THOUSAND YEARS AGO.

THE HAND OF MUMTHAZI

LEGEND HAS IT THAT THE RUBY -- AND THE SCULPTED HAND (MODELED ON MUMTHAZI'S) THAT HOLD IT -- ARE POSSESSED OF MYSTICAL POWERS.

THAT HE WHO OWNS THE HAND -- OWNS THE KEY TO HEAVEN ITSELF.

THERE ARE MANY WHO SCOFF AT SUCH TALK.

AND THERE ARE OTHERS...

...WHO KNOW BETTER.

NOW'S THE TIME, I THINK --

FOOOOF

-- T'MAKE MY PRESENCE KNOWN!

GREETINGS, ONE AND ALL -- THE NAME IS JACK --

-- MAD JACK, TO SOME--

-- BUT YOU CAN CALL ME THE JACK O' LANTERN!

MRRORW

AH, YES -- AN' THIS IS MY FRIEND AND CONFIDANT -- MAGUIRE!

WE'VE COME TO RELIEVE YA OF THE BURDEN OF LOOKING AFTER THAT PRECIOUS GEM!

NOT ON YOUR LIFE, MISTER!

Oh, PLEASE, LAD YOU'RE TALKIN' TO A MAN WHO'S LIVED AND DIED MORE TIMES THAN YOU CAN COUNT!

DO YA THINK A COUPLE OF BULLETS THROUGH THE HEART COULD POSSIBLY BE ENOUGH TO STOP --

-- THE LIKES O' ME?

H-H-HEADS-HEADS DON'T JUST FLOAT OFF PEOPLE'S BODIES!

THEY DON'T DO THIS, EITHER.

BOOOM

THAT NIGHT...

...IN QUEENS --

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'VE NOTICED, GORGEOUS -- BUT WE'RE ***ALONE*** TONIGHT.

ARE WE?

Mmmm. AUNT ANNA'S AT A MOVIE. YOUR ADONIS-LIKE HUSBAND IS IN YOUR ARMS.

IS HE?

Oh, YES. AND THIS HUSBAND OF YOURS -- HE'S BEEN FEELING SEVERELY ***KISS-DEPRIVED*** LATELY.

POOR THING. DO YOU THINK THERE'S ANYTHING I COULD ***POSSIBLY*** DO TO MAKE IT UP TO YOU?

WELL, I'VE GOT SOME SOME DIAGRAMS HERE THAT SHOULD --

HEY!

"HEY"?

I THINK THAT GUY JUST SAID SOMETHING ABOUT ***CONUNDRUM!***

Oh, ***JOY.***

-- PRODIGY...?

THE SUIT'S ***UPSTAIRS,*** REMEMBER?

THERE'S NO WAY THAT THING COULD ***FIT*** UNDER YOUR STREET CLOTHES.

BUT YOU'VE GOTTA ADMIT -- I'VE GOT A ***NICE CHEST!***

*-- YOU SAY YOU WANT THE HAND IN EXCHANGE FOR MY **DAUGHTER'S LIFE** --*

*-- BUT THE HAND, I AM AFRAID HAS BEEN **STOLEN** -- BY A COSTUMED THIEF CALLED **THE JACK O'LANTERN.***

*PLEASE -- I **BEG** YOU! YOU **MUST** RETURN OUR TABRIAZ TO US! SHE IS OUR **LIFE!***

*WE WILL GIVE YOU **ANYTHING!** BUT THE HAND... THE HAND IS NO LONGER OURS TO **GIVE!***

CONUNDRUM! JACK O'LANTERN! A PARENT'S DESPERATE PLEAS! AN INNOCENT GIRL'S LIFE!

THIS LOOKS LIKE A JOB FOR --

JUST ***GO,*** WILL YOU --

--AND SEE IF YOU CAN GET BACK HERE BEFORE AUNT ANNA DOES!

THE SUFINDIAN EMBASSY.

HAZRAM -- I SWEAR TO YOU --

--I'LL DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO BRING TABRIAZ SAFELY HOME.

HAVING GONE THROUGH A PAINFULLY SIMILAR ORDEAL WITH MY GRANDSON -- I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE FEELING. PERHAPS BETTER THAN ANY MAN ALIVE.

NORMAN, MY DEAR, OLD FRIEND -- YOUR PRESENCE HERE BRINGS ME MORE COMFORT THAN WORDS COULD EVER EXPRESS.

YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A GUARDIAN ANGEL TO OUR FAMILY -- AND TO MY DAUGHTER MOST OF ALL. I --

MY APOLOGIES FOR INTERRUPTING, AMBASSADOR --

YOU!

-- BUT I'D LIKE TO JOIN THE ILLUSTRIOUS Mr. OSBORN IN EXPRESSING A FERVENT DESIRE TO HELP -- IN ANY WAY I CAN!

YOU'RE PRODIGY, AREN'T YOU?

INDEED I AM, SIR. INDEED I--

GUARDS -- NO! NO!

THIS MAN SAVED MY LIFE TODAY!

THIS MAN SAVED MY LIFE TODAY!

AND YOU CAN REST ASSURED, Mr. AMBASSADOR, THAT I'LL TRY AND DO THE SAME FOR YOUR DAUGHTER!

THE FIENDS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS -- WILL PAY!

Mr. OSBORN -- IT IS AN HONOR, SIR, TO MEET ONE OF NEW YORK'S MOST DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS.

I'M JUST SORRY I WASN'T AROUND TO HELP YOU WITH THAT GREEN GOBLIN MESS A FEW WEEKS A GO.

WELL, WE'RE HAPPY THAT YOU'RE HERE NOW.

SHEESH! WHAT A CORNBALL!

BET SPIDER-MAN COULD TAKE HIM OUT WITH ONE HAND TIED BEHIND HIS BACK!

AND IF YOU'RE AS NAIVE AS YOU APPEAR -- MANIPULATING YOU IS GOING TO BE CHILD'S PLAY.

WHAT A STROKE OF LUCK FINDING ***OSBORN*** HERE! IF PRODIGY CAN GET INTO HIS GOOD GRACES -- GAIN HIS ***CONFIDENCE*** -- MAYBE I CAN ***USE*** THAT AS A DOOR TO GATHER MORE ***EVIDENCE*** AGAINST HIM --

-- AND ***NAIL*** THE MAGGOT ONCE AND FOR ALL!

WE HAVE RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM THIS... CONUNDRUM. HE WISHES TO MEET WITH ME... ***ALONE***... TO DISCUSS NEW TERMS FOR ***TABRIAZ'S RETURN.***

JUST GIVE ME THAT NOTE, SIR --

-- AND ***I'LL*** BE GLAD TO DISCUSS IT WITH HIM --

-- ***MAN-TO-MAN!***

WE ARE ***BLESSED*** INDEED TO HAVE PRODIGY ON OUR SIDE.

YOU ASK ***ME*** -- HE'S ALL TALK AND ***BODY ARMOR.***

I THINK YOU'RE ***WRONG,*** EUGENE.

I BELIEVE OUR FRIEND PRODIGY IS THE GENUINE ARTICLE. A ***REAL HERO.***

AND I, FOR ONE, WOULD LIKE TO GET TO KNOW HIM --

-- ***BETTER.***

IN LOWER MANHATTAN...

*...THERE IS AN OLD IRISH PUB -- LONG BOARDED UP AND FORGOTTEN -- CALLED "**MAGUIRE'S**".*

AND IT'S HERE THAT THE JACK O'LANTERN SITS, REMEMBERING THE TORMENTS OF THE PAST...

*...AND PLANNING THE VENDETTAS OF THE **FUTURE.***

I ***KNOW,*** MAGUIRE. I MISS THE OLD PLACE ***MYSELF.*** BUT THAT WAS A LONG TIME ***AGO.*** LIFE'S CHANGED ***CONSIDERABLY*** SINCE THEN --

-- AS I'M SURE YOU'VE --

MRRORWRRRR

-- NOTICED.

Ah... WILL YOU LOOK WHO'S *HERE?*

IF YOU'RE TRYIN' T'*SPOOK* ME WITH THE ***SMOKE AND MIRRORS,*** CONUNDRUM -- FORGET IT. I WAS DOIN' THE SAME -- AND ***BETTER*** -- WHEN YOU WERE STILL IN ***DIAPERS.***

HOW DID YOU KNOW WHERE I WAS MEETING THE AMBASSADOR?

Oh, PLEASE -- AN ***IDIOT*** COULD HAVE FIGURED IT OUT. AND MAD JACK IS ANYTHING ***BUT.***

*I **HOPE** YOU ARE HERE -- TO TURN THE **RUBY** OVER TO ME.*

YEAH. AN' THERE'S A BRIDGE IN ***BROOKLYN*** I'D LIKE TO SELL YA, TOO!

THE HAND BELONGS TO --

-- ***ME!***

NOT THE WAY ***I*** SEE IT. BUT LET'S NOT GET ***EMOTIONAL*** ABOUT THIS, OLD BUDDY. YOU WANT THE HAND, YOU CAN ***HAVE*** IT. ALL ***JACK*** WANTS --

-- *IS THE GIRL.*

THE GIRL?

IS THAT WHAT THIS IS ABOUT?

*THE HAND OF MUMTHAZI CAN GIVE YOU **POWER BEYOND IMAGINING** -- AND YOU WANT THE **GIRL?***

THE OLD MAN OFTEN SAID YOUR ROMANTIC STREAK WAS GOING TO KILL YOU ONE DAY.

AND THAT DAY MAY HAVE FINALLY ARRIVED!

I'VE GOT NO PERSONAL INTEREST IN TABRIAZ. YOU, OF ALL PEOPLE, SHOULD KNOW THAT. BUT I REPRESENT SOMEONE -- WHO DOES.

HIRING YOURSELF OUT LIKE A COMMON MERCENARY?

THAT, I AM AFRAID, WOULD BREAK THE OLD MAN'S HEART.

THE OLD MAN'S DEAD, CONUNDRUM.

AND SO, DEAR JACK --

-- ARE YOU!

DID YA REALLY THINK I'D JUST STAND HERE LIKE A MORON AND LET YOU TAKE ME OUT WITH THAT NERVE-GAS O' YOURS?

I KNOW ALL YOUR TRICKS -- HEY -- I TAUGHT YOU QUITE A FEW OF 'EM -- AND I --

WHAT'S THAT, MAGUIRE? TROUBLE COMING?

I DO NOT TRUST YOU, JACK. BUT I DO TRUST THE CAT.

SO I SUGGEST WE PUT OUR RIVALRY ASIDE -- UNTIL WE DEAL WITH --

MEEEOWWR

THAT!

KR-

WELL, WELL, WELL --

-- BOTH OF YOU HERE TOGETHER!

WHY AM I NOT SURPRISED?

LET'S SEE, SHALL WE, WHAT HAPPENS WHEN AN IRRESISTIBLE PUMPKIN MEETS AN IMMOVABLE --

-- BOTH..?

WHAT THE --?!

THEIR COSTUMES -- EMPTY!

--JIGSAW PUZZLE!

SLAM

AND THAT, I'LL WAGER, SHOULD TAKE CARE OF YOU --

BUT -- WHERE COULD THEY HAVE GONE?!

UP HERE, HERO!

YOUR FIRST FEW WEEKS ON THE JOB MAY'VE BEEN SMOOTH SAILING -- BUT I'VE GOT A FEELING THINGS ARE GONNA GO ***DOWNHILL*** FROM ***HERE!***

WHADDAYA SAY, CONUNDRUM? SHALL WE ***SQUASH*** THIS LITTLE ***ANACHRONISM?***

JACK --

*-- IT WOULD BE **MY** PLEASURE!*

GREAT SCOTT!

LR+M '98

TO BE CONTINUED!

MARVEL COMICS

JUN
#28

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

WWW.MARVEL.COM

DEZAGO

WIERINGO

CASE

THE SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN

HORNET™

IDENTITY CRISIS!

...AND FINALLY THIS MORNING... WHO IS THE HORNET?

N.N.B

THE NEWEST OF NEW YORK'S COSTUMED VIGILANTES. THE HORNET APPEARED SUDDENLY THURSDAY EVENING TO FOIL AN ATTEMPTED BURGLARY AT THE OFFICES OF THE DAILY BUGLE.

INTERVIEWED BRIEFLY BY OUR OWN CHRIS KAPOSTOPOLIS, THE HORNET'S VAGUE RESPONSES WERE QUESTIONABLE AT BEST...

...FROM?

Oh, Uh... I'M FROM... CHARLOTTE!

A JOKE, PERHAPS?

ALTHOUGH THE NEXT FEW DAYS WOULD PROVE HE WASN'T JOKING IN HIS DARING DETERMINATION --

-- AND HIS DESIRE TO BRING JUSTICE TO OUR CRIME-RIDDEN METROPOLIS!

ANOTHER ONE WE'LL HAVE TO KEEP OUR EYE ON...

HIS COSTUME'S SOMEWHAT SIMILAR TO HANK'S OLD YELLOWJACKET DESIGN...

CHRISTMAS! ANOTHER ONE?! WHY'S ANYBODY GONNA WANNA HIRE US, WHEN THESE GUYS'RE OUT THERE DOIN' IT FOR FREE..?

KNOWUMSAYIN'?

AND AFTER THE EXTENDED ABSENCE LAST YEAR OF GROUPS SUCH AS THE FANTASTIC FOUR AND THE AVENGERS --

-- IT'S CERTAIN THAT THE SUPER HERO COMMUNITY COULD DEFINITELY ABIDE THE ADDITION OF ONE MORE GOOD GUY!

IN A SHOW OF GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION, DAILY BUGLE CO-OWNER, NORMAN OSBORN WILL HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE LATER TODAY --

-- TO PRESENT THE HORNET WITH A CHECK -- AND TO WELCOME HIM TO THE CITY.

NOT TO MENTION THAT I'D LIKE TO LURE HIM UNDER MY INFLUENCE -- USE THAT HORNET TO PLAGUE SPIDER-MAN AT EVERY TURN -- MAKE PARKER'S LIFE A LIVING --

-- BUT THE BEAUTY OF IT, MIN, IS THAT WHEN I INTERNALIZED THE GYROS IN THE HORNET'S --

HOBIE -- I TOLD YOU. I'M IMPRESSED, OKAY..?

NOW, HUSH UP -- I'M TRYING TO LISTEN...

I'M CERTAINLY NOT ONE TO ***DENY*** THAT THE SUPER HERO COMMUNITY COULD ALWAYS USE AN ***EXTRA HAND***, BUT WITH EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED RECENTLY WITH THE ***THUNDERBOLTS*** --

I ***AGREE***, SUE. ALTHOUGH IT'S NOT AS IF WE CAN EASILY ***VERIFY*** THE ***INTEGRITY*** OF EVERY COSTUMED --

AH, DON'CHA WORRY ABOUT IT, REED -- IF THIS GUY GIVES US ANY ***TROUBLE***, WE'LL DO WHAT WE ***ALWAYS*** DO...

I ♥ NY

SUGAR-FROSTED 'RINGOS

Whole Grain Zagos

*AND NORMAN OSBORN JUST MAY HAVE SOME-THING **MORE** TO BE HAPPY ABOUT...*

...WE'LL CLOBBER 'IM!

HORNET'S NEST

IDENTITY CRISIS part 2

TODD DEZAGO script
MIKE WIERINGO pencils
co-plotters
RICH CASE inks

AS & COMICRAFT'S KIFF SCHOLL letters
GREGORY WRIGHT colors
RALPH MACCHIO editor
BOB HARRAS editor in chief

*WHEN QUESTIONED AS TO WHETHER HIS **PRESENCE** IN THE BIG APPLE WAS IN ANY WAY RELATED TO THE FIVE MILLION **SPIDER-MAN BOUNTY**, THE HORNET ONLY OFFERED **THIS** CRYPTIC RESPONSE --*

© 2017 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. WWW.MARVEL.COM

Ah... LET'S JUST SAY THAT I DON'T THINK YOU'LL HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT **SPIDER-MAN** FROM NOW ON!

RAGNAVOX

PRATTLING INSECT! HE WAS **MINE!**

IF YOU HAVE DONE ANYTHING TO THAT **ACCURSED WALL-CRAWLER** --

-- THEN IT WILL BE YOU THEY WON'T HAVE TO BOTHER **WORRYING ABOUT!**

I'M **TELLING** YOU, MARY JANE -- THERE'S **NOTHING** TO WORRY ABOUT...

I MEAN, ISN'T THIS THE VERY REASON WE **INVENTED** THE HORNET? WHY **YOU** DESIGNED THE COSTUME?

SO THAT I COULD DO SOME **GOOD** WITHOUT **OSBORN** TRYING TO **DESTROY** ME?

BECAUSE WITH THE FIVE MILLION DOLLAR BOUNTY ON SPIDEY'S HEAD, I CAN'T APPEAR IN PUBLIC IN COSTUME.

AND IT PASSED THE **ULTIMATE TEST!** HE DIDN'T EVEN **RECOGNIZE** ME! HE SHOOK MY **HAND** AND TOLD ME HE COULD **USE** A GUY LIKE ME **AROUND!**

I MEAN, COULD THIS **BE** ANY COOLER?

YEAH, WELL...

WHADDAYA ***MEAN?!*** MJ, NORMAN OSBORN WANTS TO HIRE THE ***HORNET***... ME!... TO THROW DOWN WITH ***SPIDER-MAN***... ALSO ME!... BECAUSE HE DESPISES ***PETER PARKER***...

...WHO, FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO CAME IN LATE, IS, ONCE AGAIN... ***ME!***

THIS IS LIKE... THE ***BEST!***

YEAH, PETER, ***OKAY*** -- I ***GET*** THE IRONY. BUT LET'S NOT FORGET WHO IT IS WE'RE ***DEALING WITH*** HERE...

...NORMAN OSBORN IS A ***SHARK.*** HE'S A MANIPULATIVE AND VINDICTIVE ***SCUZBALL,*** AND IF HE EVER ***FOUND OUT*** THAT YOU WERE PLAYING HIM LIKE A ***FOOL*** THIS WAY, WELL...

...WHAT I'M ***SAYING,*** TIGER, IS -- MAYBE YOU SHOULDN'T ***GO*** TO THIS LITTLE PRESS CONFERENCE HE'S GOT PLANNED. YOU'RE PUSHING YOUR ***LUCK,*** GETTING TOO ***CLO-***

ARE YOU ***KIDDING?!*** I WOULDN'T MISS THIS FOR THE ***WORLD!***

I'VE ***GOTTA*** BE THERE, MJ -- EVEN IF I'M THE ***ONLY ONE*** WHO KNOWS THAT OSBORN'S ***COURTING*** THE ONE GUY HE ***HATES*** THE ***MOST!***

WELL, IF YOU'RE GONNA GO, THEN LET ME TELL YOU ONE THING, Mr. PARKER --

-- YOU WON'T BE THE ***ONLY*** ONE --

-- ***HEE HEE HEE*** - 'CAUSE I'D ***LOVE*** TO BE THERE TO WATCH THAT BIG ***JERK*** GLOAT! ***HA HA HA!***

Oh. GOOD ***MORNING***, AUNT ANNA. I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE ***OUT*** SO EARLY.

HOPEY AND I WERE JUST WAITING FOR THE ***BUS***. SHE WANTED TO POP IN ***QUICK*** AND SAY ***GOOD MORNING***.

GOOD MORNING, HOPE. WOULD YOU LIKE SOMETHING TO ***EAT?***

'NO, THANK YOU. I HAVE TO LEAVE SOON.'

Oh, HOPE -- YOUR SIGNING HAS GOTTEN SO MUCH ***FASTER!***

OKAY, SWEETIE -- I'LL SEE YOU THIS ***AFTERNOON***.

I LOVE YOU, TOO.

LATER, HOPE. HAVE A GOOD DAY AT ***SCHOOL***.

AUNT ANNA, I TOOK THE CHICKEN OUT OF THE FREEZER, BUT CAN YOU SHOW ME WHERE YOU FOUND THAT RECIPE..?

Uh, WOW. WHY IS HOPE STARING AT ME LIKE --

MY GOD! SHE --

-- SHE...

...SHE KNOWS! BUT HOW..?

HOPEY?! ARE YOU STILL *HERE?* C'MON, SWEETIE -- YOU'LL *MISS* YOUR BUS...

AND SHORTLY, AFTER CHANGING INTO HIS NEWEST OF IDENTITIES --

-- PETER PARKER TAKES TO THE SKIES AS THE HIGH-FLYING HORNET!

HOW COULD SHE KNOW? HOW COULD SHE POSSIBLY KNOW?!

SHE COULDN'T HAVE SEEN ME..! MY SPIDER-SENSE WOULD HAVE -- Huh?

SPEAKING OF SPIDER-SENSE...

WHOA!

Oh, NO! IT'S JOHNNY..!

YOU'RE HIM, RIGHT? THE NEW GUY..? THE HORNET..?!

Um... WELL, YEAH, I...

I'M THE *HUMAN TORCH.* JOHNNY STORM OF THE *FANTASTIC FOUR.*

I *SAW* YOU ON TV.

Uh... YEAH, WELL...

Oh, ***MAN!*** I'VE ALWAYS CHANGED MY ***VOICE*** BETWEEN BEING PETER AND SPIDER-MAN -- AND ALTERED IT ***AGAIN*** WHEN I BECAME THE ***HORNET***...

...BUT JOHNNY AND I HAVE BEEN ON A ***LOT*** OF GIGS TOGETHER... HE ***KNOWS*** SPIDEY... IS HE GONNA ***RECOGNIZE*** ME?

WELL, LEMME JUST ***TELL*** YOU SOMETHING, PAL... SPIDER-MAN AND I ARE ***BUDS***... WE GO ***WAAAAY BACK!***

A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ***HUNTING*** HIM DOWN FOR THINGS ***I'M SURE*** HE HAD ***NOTHING TO DO WITH!*** I NEVER ***THOUGHT TWICE*** ABOUT IT, 'CAUSE THE GUY COULD ALWAYS TAKE CARE OF ***HIMSELF...***

...BUT AFTER ***YOUR*** LITTLE COMMENT ABOUT NOT HAVING TO WORRY ABOUT ***SPIDER-MAN*** ANYMORE...

Oh, THAT. LOOK, I'M NOT... Ummm...

...I MEAN, SPIDER-MAN ***ISN'T*** --

-- I HAVEN'T DONE ***ANYTHING*** WITH SPIDER-MAN, Mr. TORCH.

GOOD. ...FOR ***YOU***...

...'CAUSE IF ANYTHING ***HAS*** HAPPENED TO SPIDEY, YOU'RE THE GUY I'M GONNA COME ***LOOKING FOR!***

AS A MATTER OF FACT, AS OF RIGHT NOW, YOU SHOULD CONSIDER YOURSELF SPIDER-MAN'S ***PROTECTOR*** --

-- I'M GONNA HOLD YOU ***PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE!*** IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO ***HIM,*** IT HAPPENS TO ***YOU*** -- ***ONLY HOTTER!***

GET IT?

Uh... ...YEAH.

GOOD. HAVE A NICE DAY.

WELL, HOW ABOUT THAT..?

THANKS FOR THAT, JOHNNY -- I NEVER KNEW YOU ***CARED***...

I DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO BE INTIMIDATED, TICKLED OR ***TOUCHED*** -- KINDA MAKES ME FEEL ALL... ***WARM*** INSIDE..!

SHORTLY, AT THE OFFICES OF THE NEW YORK DAILY BUGLE --

DAILY BUGLE

WELL, MY COSTUME SHOULD BE SAFE *THERE!*

ESPECIALLY SINCE SOMEONE WOULD HAVE TO ACTUALLY *LIFT* THAT XEROX MACHINE TO FIND IT!

COPIER ROOM

BUT ASIDE FROM THE HORNET GEAR BEING KINDA ***CLUNKY,*** IT'S SO MUCH ***EASIER*** THAN BEING SPIDER-MAN... BEING ***HUNTED*** AND --

-- HOUNDED... Oh, ***MAN!*** ***BILLY!***

I COMPLETELY ***FORGOT***... I WAS SUPPOSED TO HIT A ***MOVIE*** WITH HIM THE OTHER NIGHT...

SEE a MIDDLE SAVAGE

ATTENTION

DAILY BUGLE
HORNET SAVES BOUNTY

...AND THAT WHOLE ***LOOTER THING*** HAPPENED! I'M SURE HE'S MAD -- THIS IS LIKE THE FOURTH OR FIFTH TIME I'VE ***BAGGED*** ON HIM... I ***WANNA*** BE HIS FRIEND, I WANNA ***HANG*** WITH HIM... BUT... MY RESPONSIB-

BILLY, MAN -- I AM ***SO*** SORRY ABOUT THE OTHER NIGHT.

DAILY BUGLE
HORNET SAVES BOUNTY

SOMETHING CAME UP AT HOME, AND I WAS GONNA GIVE YOU A CALL, BUT...

...WELL, IF YOU'LL JUST GIVE ME ONE MORE CHANCE, WE COULD GO SEE --

PETE, DUDE...

I KNOW I'M NOT THE ***EASIEST*** GUY TO LIKE. I... I WAS ***ALONE*** A LOT WHEN I WAS A KID, SO I TEND TO BE, LIKE, ***OBNOXIOUS*** WHEN I FIRST MEET PEOPLE. I SCARE 'EM ***AWAY***...

I DON'T HAVE M... ***ANY*** FRIENDS HERE IN THE CITY, BUT I...

...I THOUGHT ***WE*** COULD BE FRIENDS.

BUT I KINDA GET THE FEELING THAT YOU... CAN'T DO THAT... SO...

...LET'S JUST FORGET IT, ALL RIGHT?

BILLY, I...

NAH. IT'S OKAY, I GET IT...

I MEAN, WE CAN STILL ***WORK TOGETHER*** --

-- BUT LET'S JUST LEAVE IT AT ***THAT***, OKAY?

I'LL SEE YA UP-STAIRS.

SOMETIME LATER, ON THE ROOF OF THE BUGLE --

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN -- I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING TODAY TO JOIN ME IN WELCOMING TO OUR FAIR CITY THE NEWEST INDIVIDUAL TO BE COUNTED AMONGST HER ***COSTUMED DEFENDERS!***

I'M SURE YOU'LL AGREE THAT THE ***HORNET*** HAS HIS ***WORK CUT OUT FOR HIM,*** WHEN YOU CONSIDER THE ***CANCER*** OF CRIME THAT HAS ***SPREAD*** ACROSS OUR CITY RECENTLY --

-- ***VILE*** ACTS OF ***VIOLENCE*** AND ***TERRORISM,*** PERPETRATED BY ***AMORAL DEVIANTS*** SUCH AS THAT MISCREANT --

-- ***SPIDER-MAN!***

WHILE WE'RE WAITING FOR THE HORNET TO ***ARRIVE,*** WHICH, I HAVE BEEN ***ASSURED,*** SHOULD BE ***ANY MINUTE*** NOW --

-- I HOPE YOU WILL INDULGE ME AS I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MENTION SOME OF THE OTHER COMMUNITY EVENTS AND CHARITY FUNCTIONS THAT THE BUGLE WILL...

MAN, I THINK I'D LOSE MY ***LUNCH*** IF I HAD TO LISTEN TO OSBORN TALK ANY MORE ***TRASH!***

BEST I MAKE A ***SLICK*** LITTLE ***EXIT*** ANYWAY, SO I CAN MAKE MY ***BIG ENTRANCE*** AS --

CLAP
CLAP
-- THE HORNET!
CLAP
HORNET!
CLAP
HORNET!
HORNET!
HORNET -- IT IS WITH ***GREAT APPRECIATION*** AND ***GRATITUDE*** FOR YOUR SELFLESS ACTS OF ***HEROISM*** AND ***JUSTICE*** THAT I PRESENT YOU WITH ***THIS*** CHECK --
-- IN THE SUM OF ***TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS!*** FLASH..?
HERE YOU ARE, SIR.
OSBORN ENTERPRISES
PAY TO THE ORDER OF THE HORNET
$20,000
TWENTY THOUSAND AND NO HUNDREDTHS DOLLARS
Norman Osborn
REWARD NOTE
THANK YOU Mr. OSBORN, BUT I CANNOT ***ACCEPT*** THIS CHECK.
I WOULD ***HOPE,*** INSTEAD, THAT THIS MONEY COULD BE ***DONATED*** TO THE ***LOUGHRIDGE SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF.*** IT'S A REALLY GREAT SCHOOL ON QUEENS BOULEVARD IN --
-- Huh?!

I SHALL KILL YOU, YOU IGNORANT FOOL --!

-- FOR ROBBING ME OF THE VENGEANCE THAT WAS MINE! FOR KILLING THAT WHICH WAS MINE TO KILL!

THAT'S THE *VULTURE*, Mr. OSBORN! MAYBE IT WOULD BE BETTER IF WE WENT *BACK INSIDE*.

OSBORN ENTERPRISES
PAY TO THE ORDER OF THE HORNET $20,000
TWENTY THOUSAND AND NO HUNDREDTHS DOLLARS
REWARD NOTE
Norman Osborn

NONSENSE, M'BOY --

"-- LET'S SEE WHAT THIS HORNET'S *GOT*!"

THWIT THWIT THWIT

Um... I DUNNO *WHO* YOU ARE OR WHAT YOU *WANT*, PAL --

-- BUT WHY DON'T WE SEE HOW YOU LIKE SOME OF *THESE*!

YOUR LITTLE PROJECTILES AREN'T *FAST* ENOUGH FOR *ME*, LITTLE BEE --

THIT THIT THIT

THE *VULTURE*..? WHAT --

-- AND **OBVIOUSLY** NEITHER ARE **YOU!**

I FIND IT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT YOU COULD HAVE **BESTED** SPIDER-MAN, LET ALONE **SLAY** HIM!

WOW! HE DEFLECTED MY **HORNET STINGERS** WITH A **FLIP** OF HIS **WING!** CAN'T FORGET THAT TOOMES IS **FASTER** -- AND **STRONGER** -- THAN HE LOOKS!

ENJOY HAPPY HOUR AT O'HAVERS

AND A **MUCH** BETTER **AERIALIST!** HE'S LITERALLY FLYING **CIRCLES** AROUND **ME!**

THIS ISN'T MY ELEMENT -- **YET!** GOTTA TRY TO TIME THIS **PUNCH** --

WHEEE

-- **Huh?** WHERE'D HE --

UNGH!

SHING

PATHETIC **SNAIL.**

HE'S RIGHT! I'M TOO SLOW UP HERE -- **VULNERABLE!**

HIS WINGS ARE RAZOR-SHARP! I WAS LUCKY TO CATCH THAT FIRST SLASH ON MY **ARMOR,** BUT I WOULDN'T BET ON IT A **SECOND TIME!**

HE'S **ALWAYS** HAD THE ADVANTAGE IN THE AIR -- **MANEUVERABILITY** --

-- SO LET'S SEE WHAT *HAPPENS* IF WE *GO TO THE GROUND!*

ENJOY HAPPY HOUR

RUNNING ONLY *DELAYS* YOUR DEATH, *COWARD!*

I'LL *SLICE* YOU TO *RIBBONS* BEFORE YOU CAN EVEN MAKE THE *PAVEMENT!*

?!

...

...*VULCHY?*

MAYBE WE NEED TO ENROLL YOU IN ONE OF THOSE COURSES LIKE, *"101 WAYS TO MORE EFFECTIVE THREATENING"*. Y'KNOW, SOMETHING THAT'LL PUT A LITTLE *BAD* IN YOUR BUTT!

OR TRY TO WATCH A LITTLE MORE *'JERRY SPRINGER'!*

THESE GAUNTLETS ARE *GREAT*, BUT THEY'RE *WEIGHING* ME DOWN... GOTTA *LOSE 'EM* --

AW, C'MON, *VULCHY* -- I *KNOW* YOU CAN SOUND MORE MENACING THAN *THAT!* WANNA GIVE IT ANOTHER *TRY..?*

-- AND FALL BACK ON THE OLD RELIABLE *AXIOM:*

"WHEN ALL ELSE **FAILS**... DO THE **UNEXPECTED!**"

CHOOOOM

LOOK OUT, VULCHY -- I'M COMIN' UP!

Eh?!

IT'S...

...HIM?!

MISSION CONTROL -- WE HAVE *LIFT-OFF!*

NULGG!

I...

...I KNOW YOU!

--THE HORNET IS SPIDER-MAN!

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, YOU IMPOSTOR! I KNOW YOUR SECRET! THERE IS NO HORNET--

YOU COULDN'T *DECEIVE ME,* YOU WEB-BRAINED *FOOL!* I'VE KNOWN YOU FOR *FAR TOO LONG! DREAMED* OF HOW I WOULD *KILL YOU!*

DID YOU THINK I WOULDN'T *KNOW?!* THAT I WOULDN'T *RECOGNIZE* THAT *INCESSANT* --

-- *INSIPID* --

-- *PRATTLING..?!*

BUT NOW THAT I *DO* KNOW, I WILL TAKE MY *TIME* --

-- IN *EXACTING* MY *REVENGE* ON -- *Eh?!* --

-- *NO!*

WHAM

SHUT.

UP.

Y'KNOW, A GUY CAN ONLY TAKE *SO MUCH* OF THAT *INCESSANT, INSIPID PRATTLING..!*

MOMENTS LATER...

THERE HE IS, BOYS! CUFF HIM! A LOT! ...AND BE CAREFUL OF THOSE WINGS...

...THOSE THINGS ARE *DOUBLE-EDGED...*

...AND *DANGEROUS!*

LATER THAT EVENING...

PETER? ARE YOU UP THERE?

YEAH.

SO, HOW WAS THE PRESS CONFERENCE? WAS THE HORNET --

-- PETER -- WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

WELL, MARY JANE -- I HATE TO TELL YOU THIS, BUT I THINK THE HORNET IS DEAD..!

WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

THE VULTURE CRASHED THE PRESS CONFERENCE, AND DURING THE AERIAL STUNT SHOW, OSBORN GOT TIPPED TO THE FACT THAT THE HORNET IS JUST ANOTHER NAME FOR SPIDER-MAN!

HE WAS VISIBLY DISPLEASED.

FORTUNATELY, I DON'T THINK ANYONE ELSE THERE HEARD OR CARED. THEY THOUGHT IT WAS JUST ANOTHER DEFEATED VILLAIN THROWING OUT A FINAL WACKY ACCUSATION!

BUT OSBORN KNEW...

DON'T WORRY, TIGER --

...WE'LL SURVIVE! WE ALWAYS DO.

NO MATTER WHAT NORMAN THROWS AT US -- NO MATTER WHAT THE REPERCUSSIONS OF ALL THIS ARE...

...WE'LL MANAGE.

SO... HOW WAS IT..?

WHAT?

NORMAN'S FACE! I SAID I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO SEE HIM GLOAT WHILE HE THOUGHT HE HAD YOU IN HIS POCKET. HOW DID HE LOOK?

Oh, HE WAS ALL THAT, ALL RIGHT -- BUT THE BEST WAS WHEN HE REALIZED IT WAS ME BEHIND THE HORNET'S MASK! HA! IT WAS PRICELESS! IT WAS LIKE SOMEBODY'D HIT HIM OVER THE HEAD WITH A...

...SIGN..?

Y'KNOW... ...HOPE SAID SOMETHING KINDA FUNNY TO ME THIS MORNING...

THE END? NOT NEARLY...

MARVEL COMICS

JUN
#435

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

WWW.MARVEL.COM

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN®

RICOCHET™

DEFALCO
BENNETT
LaROSA

IDENTITY CRISIS!

THE AMAZING Stan Lee presents: SPIDER MAN

FUN 'N GAMES WITH THE ★FOUR★STAR★SQUAD!★

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN BEING A FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SUPER HERO JUST AIN'T ALL IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE!

NEEDLESS TO SAY, TONIGHT IS CERTAINLY ONE OF 'EM...

SOMEONE'S BEEN ***DOGGIN'*** US EVER SINCE WE WERE RELEASED ON BAIL, ***BLOODSCREAM.***

I THOUGHT I SAW 'IM DUCK BEHIND THIS FORKLIFT, BUT NO ONE'S HERE!

WHAT TROUBLES THEE, ***ROUGHHOUSE?***

WHY DOST THOU ***FRET*** AND ***RAGE*** AT EVERY SHADOW?

BE AT EASE, MY FRIEND! WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR. ONLY A MADMAN WOULD RISK OUR WRATH.

SWELL! ONE MORON ALSO SPOTS ME.

THE OTHER DISPARAGES MY SANITY.

AND RODNEY DANGERFIELD THINKS HE HAS ISSUES WITH RESPECT!

FUN 'N GAMES WITH

TOM DEFALCO WRITER

JOE BENNETT PENCILER

BUD LAROSA INKER

RICHARD STARKINGS AND COMICRAFT LETTERING

BOB SHAREN COLORS

RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR

BOB HARRAS EDITOR IN CHIEF

© 2017 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. WWW.MARVEL.COM

UNKNIT THY SULLEN BROW, AND LET US RETIRE TO THE QUARTERS PROVIDED BY OUR GENEROUS BENEFACTOR!

I REALLY HOPE HE STOCKED UP ON ***RING DINGS*** AND ***YOO-HOO!***

T'WOULD NOT SURPRISE ME! HIS FAITHFUL MANSERVANT DID ASK OF OUR TASTES.

ANY CHANCE THE BOAT IS WIRED FOR CABLE?

I AIN'T SEEN AN EPISODE O' ***SOUTH PARK*** SINCE WE'VE BEEN LOCKED UP.

RING DINGS?

YOO-HOO?

SOUTH PARK?

*HOO-BOY! **SUPER VILLAINS** REALLY HAVE CHANGED WITH THE YEARS.*

SO HAVE I!

*WASN'T SO LONG AGO THAT I'D BE HANGING FROM A **WEBLINE**, AND DRESSED IN A FAR MORE COLORFUL **COSTUME**.*

BUT THAT WAS BEFORE I WAS FALSELY ACCUSED OF MURDERING A LOWLIFE NAMED JOEY Z --

*-- AND THE **DAILY BUGLE** PUT A FIVE MILLION DOLLAR BOUNTY ON MY HEAD*

*WITH HALF THE CITY HUNTING FOR **SPIDER-MAN**, IT SEEMED PRUDENT TO ASSUME A NEW IDENTITY.*

AND SO I DID!

FOUR OF THEM IN FACT!

WHILE THAT MAY SEEM A TAD EXCESSIVE, I'M NOT THE FIRST SUPER JOCK TO TRY THIS TRICK.

EVEN IF ONE OR MORE OF MY NEW LOOKS GETS BLOWN, I'LL ALWAYS HAVE A FALLBACK.

*PRETTY **CRAFTY**, Huh?!*

I THINK YOU'RE NUTS!

YOU KNEW THESE TWO LEG-BREAKERS WORKED FOR THE ***BLACK TARANTULA***... AND YOU STILL ***TRAILED*** THEM?!

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM, MARY JANE? BETWEEN MY SPIDER-SENSE AND THIS COSTUME, I FIGURED THEY'D NEVER CATCH A GLIMPSE OF ME.

EXCUUUSE ME! I KEEP FORGETTING THAT YOU CAN BLEND INTO SHADOWS WHENEVER YOU'RE ***THE DARK!***

DUSK!

PARDON --?!

I CALL MYSELF ***DUSK*** WHEN I'M IN THIS COSTUME!

WHATEVER!

MAYBE I CAN'T KEEP ALL YOUR NAMES STRAIGHT --

-- BUT I DO REMEMBER THAT THE ***BLACK TARANTULA*** GAVE YOU A MAJOR BEATING RECENTLY!

AND THAT'S WHILE YOU WERE STILL A WEB-SWINGING WONDER!

HEY! HE CAUGHT ME ON AN OFF DAY.

IT HAPPENS!

MAYBE SO, PETER, BUT IT TOOK YEARS TO DEVELOP YOUR SKILLS AS ***SPIDER-MAN.***

YOU HAVE NO REAL ***FIGHTING EXPERIENCE*** IN ANY OF THESE NEW IDENTITIES.

NOT TRUE! I'VE ALREADY TAKEN ON THE LOOTER, THE VULTURE, THE TRAPSTER AND BLASTAAR!

ALL ***RIGHT!*** SO YOU WON A FEW MINOR SKIRMISHES --!

MINOR SKIRMISHES --?!

DO YOU HONESTLY BELIEVE THE ***HORNET, PRODIGY, DUSK*** OR ***RICOCHET*** CAN GO TOE TO TOE WITH AN INHUMAN, KILLING MACHINE LIKE THE ***BLACK TARANTULA?!***

WAY TO GO, PRETTY LADY! YOU JUST SCORED FOUR FOR FOUR!

DON'T CHANGE THE SUBJECT, MISTER! I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU!

I KNOW... AND I DON'T MEAN TO MAKE LIGHT OF YOUR FEARS.

IT'S JUST THAT I'M IN A RUSH. I'M SUPPOSED TO MEET ***DELILAH*** IN AN HOUR!

Ah, *YESSS*... ***DELILAH!*** AS IF THINGS WEREN'T BAD ENOUGH, YOU'RE NOW CONSORTING WITH A BEAUTIFUL ASSASSIN!

C'MON, MARY JANE! YOU KNOW THAT I'M ONLY HANGING WITH HER TO GET AN INSIDE LINE ON THE UNDER-WORLD.

SHE WORKS FOR A GANG-LORD KNOWN AS ***THE ROSE,*** WHO WAS PRETTY HIGH IN THE ORGANIZATION UNTIL THE ***TARANTULA*** MADE THE SCENE.

IT'S ALMOST FUNNY TO THINK THAT YOU'RE PRETENDING TO BE A CROOK IN ***TWO*** OF YOUR FOUR IDENTITIES.

HOW ON EARTH DO YOU MANAGE TO KEEP EVERYTHING STRAIGHT?

WHAT CAN I SAY?

I'M BLESSED WITH A QUICK ***WIT*** AND A RAZOR-SHARP ***MIND!***

REALLY --?!

CARE TO REPHRASE THAT ANSWER?

YESSIR...

...THERE ARE DEFINITELY TIMES WHEN BEING A FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SUPER HERO JUST AIN'T ALL IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE!

THIS JERK ACTUALLY CALLS HIMSELF *RICOCHET?*

RICOCHET?!

WHAT KIND OF STUPID NAME IS THAT?

BET HE'S *FRENCH!*

Uh... NO OFFENSE INTENDED, HONEY...

BUT I DON'T THINK A GROWN MAN WHO WEARS A Leather Mask AND CALLS HIMSELF The Rose IS IN ANY POSITION TO CAST ASPERSIONS.

POINT TAKEN!

CAN HE BE TRUSTED?

ARE YOU Crazy?

HE'S A HIRED HAND WHO'D BETRAY HIS OWN MOTHER FOR THE RIGHT PRICE.

SOUNDS LIKE ***OUR*** KIND OF PEOPLE, DELILAH!

HE'LL SERVE HIS PURPOSE.

EXCELLENT! OUR ILLUSTRIOUS BOSS OF BOSSES, DON FORTUNATO, RECENTLY GAVE THE BLACK TARANTULA PERMISSION TO OPERATE IN THIS CITY.

I, OF COURSE, MUST OBEY THE DON'S WISHES.

BUT A LOOSE CANNON LIKE ***RICOCHET*** --?

I TREMBLE TO THINK OF THE ***TROUBLE*** HE MIGHT CAUSE!

IMPRESSIVE, MY FRIEND! MOST IMPRESSIVE!

MANY HAVE CHALLENGED THE WEB-SWINGER! FEW HAVE EVER MANAGED TO DEFEAT HIM! AND NONE AS DECISIVELY AS YOU!

THE BLACK TARANTULA IS HUMBLED BY YOUR COMPLIMENTS, DON FORTUNATO.

MY FATHER -- GOD REST HIS SOUL -- USED TO WARN ME THAT A MAN WHO USED THE ROYAL "WE" OR REFERRED TO HIMSELF IN THE THIRD PERSON WAS NOT TO BE TRUSTED.

YOUR FATHER SOUNDS LIKE AN INTELLIGENT MAN!

WE THINK YOU SHOULD ALSO ADD "MEN WHO WEAR MASKS"!

WHY AM I NOT SURPRISED?

BECAUSE YOU, TOO, ARE INTELLIGENT!

WHERE IS THE ROSE?

I THOUGHT HE WAS SUPPOSED TO JOIN US.

HE'LL BE HERE.

THOUGH I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT A MAN WITH YOUR VAST... EXPERIENCE... WOULD HAVE DEVELOPED MORE PATIENCE OVER THE YEARS.

I'M SURE I CAN ENTERTAIN YOU UNTIL HE ARRIVES.

PERHAPS YOU WOULD CARE TO HEAR A MOST FASCINATING STORY WHICH WAS RECENTLY RELATED TO ME...

WHAT KIND OF STORY?

A TALE SET IN AN EXOTIC LAND, FULL OF ADVENTURE --

-- AND A PRIZE MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD!

"I HOPE THAT YOU, LIKE ME, ARE A STUDENT OF HISTORY, AND KNOW OF THE GREAT VENETIAN EXPLORER ***MARCO POLO*** WHO TRAVELED TO ***CHINA*** IN THE LATE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

"IT IS KNOWN THAT POLO OFTEN JOURNEYED WITH HIS FATHER AND UNCLE...

"BUT MY TALE CONCERNS ANOTHER MEMBER OF HIS FIRST EXPEDITION.

"AN UNNAMED SCHOLAR AND WARRIOR WHO WAS MUCH TAKEN WITH THE MARTIAL ARTISTS OF THE FAR EAST.

"SO GREAT WAS HIS DESIRE TO LEARN THEIR DARK SECRETS THAT HE SOUGHT A MYSTERIOUS SECT OF ASSASSINS --

"-- WHOSE DESCENDANTS ARE BELIEVED TO PLY THEIR GRIM CRAFT TO THIS VERY DAY.

"YEAR AFTER YEAR, THE EUROPEAN STUDIED THEIR DEADLY ARTS AND LORE UNTIL HE WAS GIFTED WITH THEIR MOST VALUABLE POSSESSION --

"-- THE SECRET OF ***IMMORTALITY!***"

THERE ARE THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT THIS ***IMMORTAL WARRIOR*** STILL LIVES AMONG US.

I APOLOGIZE FOR ARRIVING SO LATE, MY FRIENDS.

DID I MISS ANYTHING?

EUBOEA, AN ISLAND IN THE AEGEAN SEA...

WE HAVE DONE WELL.

OUR GLORIOUS MASTER WILL BE PLEASED.

WE, OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF SCRIERS, NOW POSSESS THE DELICATE TREASURE WHICH HE ONCE ENTRUSTED INTO THE CARE OF ALISON MONGRAIN.

SINCE THE WOMAN IS OF NO FURTHER USE TO OUR MASTER, AN APPROPRIATE ACCIDENT MUST BE ARRANGED.

IT IS ALREADY DONE, BROTHER.

WE PLANTED A BOMB ON HER YACHT.

VERY EFFICIENT, BROTHER. THE MASTER WILL NOT ABIDE ANY LOOSE ENDS.

I HAPPEN TO BE A LOOSE END MYSELF --

-- AND IT IS MY FERVENT DESIRE TO ELIMINATE HIM!

WHAT A COINCIDENCE!

MANHATTAN, AN ISLAND LOCATED BETWEEN THE HUDSON RIVER AND NEW YORK BAY...

HOW DID YOUR MEETING FARE?

AS WELL AS CAN BE EXPECTED.

FORTUNATO AND THE ROSE STILL BELIEVE THAT MY MAIN INTEREST IS TO ENCROACH UPON THEIR PETTY DOMAINS.

THEY LACK THE LUXURY OF YOUR ABILITY TO THINK LONG TERM.

TRUE! MEN SUCH AS THEY CONGRATULATE THEMSELVES WHEN THEY PLAN FOR MERE YEARS IN ADVANCE.

THE BLACK TARANTULA, HOWEVER, MUST THINK IN TERMS OF DECADES AND CENTURIES.

ON A RELATED TOPIC, FORTUNATO HAS BEEN LOOKING INTO MY BACKGROUND. HE HAS ALREADY UNCOVERED MANY IMPORTANT DETAILS --

-- BUT HE LACKS A CRUCIAL FACT!

WHERE HAS HE ERRED?

I WILL EXPLAIN LATER, CHESBRO. RIGHT NOW I PREFER TO DISCUSS OUR TWO LESS-THAN-EFFICIENT OPERATIVES.

HAVE YOU HEARD FROM BLOODSCREAM AND ROUGHHOUSE?

THEY ARE QUARTERED WITHIN ONE OF YOUR CARGO SHIPS, MASTER. THEY APOLOGIZE FOR THEIR RECENT FAILURE*--

-- AND EAGERLY AWAIT A NEW ASSIGNMENT!

* AS SHOWN IN WOLVERINE#123 -- WOLVERALF

Ooooo! LOOKS LIKE Beavis and Butthead ARE FINALLY ON THE MOVE.

I STILL THINK WE SHOULD HAVE GONE IN AND REDECORATED THEIR LITTLE LOVE BOAT IN Blood Red!

I THOUGHT YOU WANTED TO LEARN WHY THE TARANTULA'S KEEPING THEM AROUND!

Ah, Yesssss... THEY SCREWED UP A PROTECTION RACKET, AND HE USUALLY REWARDS FAILURE WITH Death!

I SUPPOSE WE CAN ALWAYS Vivisect THEM LATER.

KEEPING THIS PSYCHO UNDER CONTROL IS ANOTHER THING WHICH AIN'T ALL IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE!

BOUNCING FROM ROOFTOP TO ROOFTOP, ROUGHHOUSE AND BLOODSCREAM LEAD US ACROSS TOWN WHERE THEY MEET UP WITH -- **HEYYY!**

I KNOW THAT LITTLE GUY!

I'VE SEEN HIM HANGING AROUND **EMPIRE STATE UNIVERSITY** -- AND HAVE ALWAYS ASSUMED HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE FACULTY.

COULD HE HAVE BEEN SPYING ON ME?

SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU, RICOCHET? YOU'VE SUDDENLY GONE ALL RIGID.

NOT THAT I'M COMPLAINING!

W-WHO'S THE DWARF?

SOMEONE WHO WORKS DIRECTLY WITH THE TARANTULA.

HE'S OBVIOUSLY HERE TO PASS ON INSTRUCTIONS TO ROUGHHOUSE AND BLOODSCREAM.

Hhhhm! I'M AFRAID THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY FOR US TO LEARN WHAT THEY'RE PLANNING --!

Hi, Fellas!
YOU LOOK LIKE THE TYPE WHO KNOWS HOW TO SHOW A GIRL A GOOD TIME.
WHAT FOOLISHNESS IS THIS?!
JUST SOME CRAZY BABE WITH A MAD ON!
YOU HANDLE HER --
-- WHILE I ORDER A FEW APPETIZERS FOR THE TABLE.
SH-SHE IS THE DEADLY ***DELILAH!*** AN ASSASSIN WITH MORE THAN SUFFICIENT JUSTIFICATION TO HATE THE TARANTULA!
THAT SO? SINCE YOU'RE SO FULL'A INFORMATION, CHESBRO --
-- YOU CAN HELP ME DECIDE BETWEEN THE *CLAMS CASINO*, AND THE --
-- ***HEADS UP!*** LOOKS LIKE THE LADY BROUGHT A ***DATE!***
DO I DETECT A NOTE OF JEALOUSY?
FORGET IT, PAL! YOU'RE NOT HER TYPE.
SHE'D NEVER GO FOR A LOSER WITH A ***GLASS JAW!***
BAD MOVE, PRETTY BOY.
I WAS CHEWING ON A *BREAD-STICK*... AND YOU GOT YOUR *SIZE ELEVENS* ALL OVER IT!
Uh-Oh! I HIT HIM WITH ENOUGH FORCE TO DOWN A SEQUOIA... AND HE JUST SHRUGGED IT OFF!
YOU ***RUINED*** MY MEAL!
I'M GONNA EVEN US UP BY DOIN' THE SAME T'YOUR ***SPINE!***
IF YOU'RE THAT UPSET ABOUT A BREADSTICK --
-- I'M GLAD I BEAT THE SOUP TO THE TABLE!
11

EVEN AS THE HUMAN FREIGHT TRAIN BEARS DOWN ON ME, I SPOT CHESBRO JOINING THE MAD DASH FOR EXIT.

INSTINCTIVELY, I TRY TO SNAG HIM WITH A WEB-LINE...

...THAT'S WHEN I REMEMBER THAT I... Uh... LEFT MY WEB-SHOOTERS IN MY OTHER SUIT.

So Tall! So Pale! So Gruesome!

I'LL MAKE YOU A DEAL, SWEETIE -- YOU SPILL THE TARANTULA'S CURRENT SCHEME, AND I'LL GO EASY ON YOU!

UNLESS YOU'D PREFER A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE!

AS ENTICING AS THAT MAY SOUND, T'WOULD BE BAD FORM TO BETRAY SO GENEROUS AN EMPLOYER!

HOWEVER, THY PRESENCE IS FAR MORE WELCOME THAN E'ER THOU COULDST CONCEIVE, WOMAN!

WHILE ROUGHHOUSE AND CHESBRO WOULD HAVE BEEN CONTENT TO GORGE ON COMMON FARE --

-- MY TASTES ARE FAR MORE EXOTIC!

I'M NOT EXACTLY SURE HOW BLOODSCREAM'S POWER WORKS, BUT THE INSTANT HE MAKES CONTACT --

-- DELILAH BEGINS TO BLEED!

THERE ISN'T A MARK OR WOUND ON HER --

-- BUT THAT DOESN'T STOP THE BLOOD FROM FLOWING RIGHT THROUGH HER SKIN!

MY FIRST REACTION IS TO SPRING TO HER SIDE, BUT ROUGHHOUSE HAS OTHER IDEAS --!

YOU THINK YA CAN AVOID ME BY BOUNCIN' AROUND LIKE A HYPERACTIVE SUPER BALL?

NO SUCH LUCK, PAL!

I'M GONNA SWAT YA INTO THE MIDDLE'A NEXT WEEK!

DO ME A FAVOR, AND AIM FOR **THURSDAY** NIGHT!

THAT WAY I'LL GET TO SEE **E.R.** BEFORE ANY OF MY FRIENDS!

I NEED TO PRACTICE MY NEW FIGHTING TECHNIQUES, AND THERE'S NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT --!

YOU LIKE **MEDICAL DRAMAS?** BY THE TIME I'M FINISHED, YOU'LL BE THE **STAR** OF YOUR OWN!

MARY JANE WAS RIGHT EARLIER! THOUGH I'M SUPPOSED TO BE **RICOCHET,** I KEEP TAPPING MY PALM --

-- AND EXPECTING MY **WEB-SHOOTERS** TO RESPOND!

WHAT THE HECK ARE THESE CRAZY THINGS? THEY'RE BOUNCIN' OFF THE WALLS, THE CEILING AND THE FLOOR!

BATTERING ME FROM EVERY POSSIBLE DIRECTION, LIKE A SWARM'A INSECTS!

ENOUGH! I DON'T MIND TRADIN' PUNCHES, AND TAKIN' A FEW LUMPS --

-- BUT **THIS** IS TOO BLASTED MUCH!

SINCE YOU WON'T STAND AND FIGHT LIKE A REAL MAN, **I'M OUTTA HERE!**

KWAKK

HE SMASHES THROUGH THE SIDE WALL, TAKING OUT A FEW SUPPORT BEAMS ON THE WAY!

AND HE'S GONE BY THE TIME I DIG MYSELF OUT OF THE RESULTANT DEBRIS.

LUCKILY, THE RESTAURANT HAD CLEARED OUT LONG AGO.

THE PLACE IS COMPLETELY DESERTED.

WELL...ALMOST!

A DOZEN CONTRADICTORY THOUGHTS RAGE WITHIN ME WHEN I SPOT **DELILAH.**

SHE MAY BE A HEARTLESS ASSASSIN --

-- A MERCILESS MONSTER WHO, DESERVES TO SPEND THE REST OF HER LIFE IN JAIL --

-- BUT BLOODSCREAM'S GOTTA PAY FOR THE SUFFERING HE CAUSED!

I'M STILL DEBATING THE WISDOM OF MOVING HER TO THE NEAREST HOSPITAL --

-- WHEN THAT DECISION IS ABRUPTLY YANKED FROM MY GRASP!

YOU'RE SURROUNDED!

COME OUT WITH YOUR HANDS UP!

FIGURING THE BOYS IN BLUE WILL ATTEND TO HER WOUNDS, I FOLLOW ROUGHHOUSE'S LEAD --

LOOK! HE'S MAKING A BREAK FOR IT --?

B-BUT ***WHO*** IS HE?

FROM THE WAY HE'S ***HOPPING*** AND THAT BIG **R** ON HIS BACK, I'D GUESS HE'S CALLED THE ***RABBIT!***

THE RABBIT --?!

LOOKS LIKE I'M BACK IN ***DANGERFIELD*** TERRITORY!

Oh, WELL! RESPECT MAY EVER ELUDE ME --

-- BUT BLOODSTREAM AND ROUGHHOUSE WON'T!

THAT WAS CHESBRO ON THE PHONE...

'TIS THE WISH OF THE BLACK TARANTULA THAT WE PROCEED WITH THE ABDUCTION!

FINE BY ME -- BUT I HOPE YA ASKED FOR A BONUS AFTER THAT MIX-UP AT THE RESTAURANT!

ACCORDING TO THE RADIO, THE POLICE TOOK THE BROAD T'THE HOSPITAL... BUT HER PARTNER MANAGED T'SKIP.

YOU THINK HE'LL RESURFACE?

IN TIME, BUT I DOUBT HE WOULD DARE INTERFERE WITH US AFTER -- HOLD! WHAT WAS THAT?

KREAK

PROBABLY JUST THE DECK SHIFTING --

-- BUT I'LL GIVE IT A LOOK-SEE!

I KNOW YOU DIDN'T BELIEVE ME, BUT I STILL THINK SOMEONE WAS ON T'US EARLIER!

AREN'T YOU A BRIGHT LAD?

WH-WHAAA --?! SOMEONE'S SPRINGING FROM THE SHADOWS --!

THE NAME'S DUSK, AND I'M HERE IN LIEU OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD WELCOMING COMMITTEE!

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE FIRST -- THE LOCAL HOSPITAL OR THE CITY JAIL?

GET *AWAY* FROM ME, YOU SHROUD-COVERED FREAK!

WITH AN UNFRIENDLY ATTITUDE LIKE THAT, SEE IF YOU GET YOUR COMPLIMENTARY FRUIT BASKET!

WHAT THE --?!

W-WHERE'D HE *GO*?!

RIGHT BEHIND YOU, LUMMOX --

-- AND THIS PARTY HAS BARELY BEGUN!

WHAT TROUBLES THEE, ROUGHHOUSE?

HAS THAT ANNOYING ***BOUNCING PERSON*** RETURNED?

IN A WORD... ***YES!***

AND HE'S BROUGHT A FEW ***FRIENDS!***

BY THE WAY, YOU'D BETTER CALL ME BY THE CORRECT NAME --

-- OR I'LL SLAP YOU WITH A SUIT FOR ***APPELLATION HARASSMENT!***

WHAT'S GOING ON?

HOW MANY GUYS ARE WE FACIN' --?!

ACTUALLY, THERE'S ONLY ***ONE*** --

-- BUT I CAN BE A REAL **STINKER** AT TIMES!

AND THIS IS ONE OF THEM!

SURE, I OWE YOU STIFFS FOR **DELILAH** --

-- AND I STILL WANT TO LEARN WHY THE **BLACK TARANTULA** HIRED YOU --

-- BUT THAT SHOULDN'T STOP ME FROM HAVING A LITTLE **FUN!**

T-THOSE GUYS COULDN'T HAVE JUST VANISHED!

THEY GOTTA BE AROUND SOME-WHERE --!

SINCE I DO NEED MORE PRACTICE WITH ALL FOUR OF MY NEW IDENTITIES, I FIGURED TONIGHT WOULD GIVE ME THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY --

-- TO HONE MY SKILLS!

YOU SHOULD BE MORE **CAUTIOUS**, SIR!

EVEN IN A WONDERFUL CITY LIKE OURS, IT ISN'T PARTICULARLY WISE TO WALK ALONE AT NIGHT!

I STRONGLY SUGGEST YOU ALLOW ME TO ESCORT YOU TO A SECURE FACILITY WHERE YOU'LL BE SAFE AND WARM!

A-ANOTHER ONE?!

HEY! I KNOW YOU --!

I READ ABOUT YA IN THE DAILY BUGLE! YOU'RE THAT PRODIGY GUY!

BUT YOU'RE SUPPOSED T'BE SOME KIND'A HERO!

HOW COME YOU'RE HANGIN' WITH A SKELL LIKE RICOCHET?!

ALL I CAN SAY, SIR IS THAT --

-- APPEARANCES ARE OFTEN DECEIVING!

ROUGHHOUSE! ROUGHHOUSE! DIDST THOU CAUSE THAT GIANT SPLASH?

LET US BE GONE FROM THIS HAUNTED SCOW!

BY THE WAY, YOU SHOULD REALLY WATCH YOUR STEP --

-- I SINCERELY DOUBT THE BLACK TARANTULA HAS ADEQUATE LIABILITY COVERAGE!

SOUNDS LIKE A ***SNACKY IDEA*** TO ME!

BEFORE YOU GO, HOWEVER, I REALLY NEED YOU TO OPEN UP FOR ME AND MY FRIENDS.

WE NEED TO PROVE WE CAN CUT IT IN THE ***HERO BIZ,*** BUT WE CAN ONLY DO THAT IF WE LEARN YOUR ***MISSION*** FOR THE TARANTULA!

WHEW! BARELY MADE IT BACK IN TIME --!

SWITCHING FROM ONE COSTUME TO ANOTHER IS A LOT HARDER THAN IT LOOKS --

-- ESPECIALLY UNDER THESE LESS-THAN-IDEAL CONDITIONS!

STILL, HAVING ALL FOUR OF THESE NEW HEROES SHOW UP AT ONCE WILL STIFLE ANY SUSPICION THAT THEY COULD BE ONE GUY.

Oh, WELL! *I GUESS I SHOULD GO ROUND UP* ***ROUGHHOUSE,*** *AND --*

BACK AWAY FROM MY FRIEND -- ***NOW!***

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL!

LOOKS LIKE YOUR PALS ALREADY RAN OFF! BE GOOD TO YOURSELF AND DO THE SAME!

SORRY, MY SOGGY CHUM, BUT THE ***HORNET*** NEVER RUNS!

AT LEAST NOT WHILE HE STILL HAS A FEW ***TRICKS*** UP HIS SLEEVE!

THWIT

THWIT

THWIT

BAH! I LAUGH AT YOUR STUPID LITTLE --

STINGERS!

SEDATIVE STINGERS, IF YOU WANT TO GET TECHNICAL!

BUT THAT'S *OLD NEWS* BY NOW!

HORNET -- IF THAT BE THY TRUE NAME -- I BELIEVE WE CAN YET STRIKE A BARGAIN!

I PROPOSE A SIMPLE EXCHANGE...

...*KNOWLEDGE* FOR *FREEDOM!*

WHY SHOULD I OFFER YOU A DEAL?

HUMAN LIVES HANG IN THE BALANCE!

THOUGH *ROUGHHOUSE* AND I HAVE FALLEN, THE *BLACK TARANTULA* WILL NOT BE DETERRED FROM HIS CHOSEN PATH!

EUBOEA...

MONGRAIN?

ALISON MONGRAIN?

THE PATIENT HAS ALREADY CHECKED OUT, *Mr. ROBERTSON.*

HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE? I UNDERSTAND SHE WAS SERIOUSLY INJURED IN A FREAK BOATING ACCIDENT.

DID SHE LEAVE A FORWARDING ADDRESS?

I AM AFRAID NOT! NOW *PLEASE* -- YOU MUST MOVE TO THE SIDE! WE HAVE TO ATTEND TO A POLICE ACTION!

A POLICE ACTION?

COULD IT POSSIBLY BE RELATED TO THE REASONS WHICH BROUGHT ME?

THOSE INJURED MEN -- THEY FIT THE DESCRIPTION OF *SCRIERS!*

I WONDER IF THEY'RE SOMEHOW RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT HAPPENED TO *MONGRAIN?!*

MY GOD --!

I RECOGNIZE THOSE *SCARS* ON THEIR FACES!

T-THEY'RE LUCKY TO BE ALIVE!

T-THAT MARK...

IT'S THE MARK OF KAINE!

LIFE IS AN ENDLESS SERIES OF **CHOICES.**

SOMETIMES YOU QUESTION THE ONES YOU'VE MADE.

NOT TONIGHT.

I'M SURE BLOODSCREAM AND ROUGHHOUSE ARE GUILTY OF SOME HORRENDOUS CRIMES SOMEWHERE, BUT I HAD TO LEARN THE TARANTULA'S **TARGET**...

WHEN I REALIZED HIS MAN HAD BEEN LURKING AROUND E.S.U., I NATURALLY ASSUMED IT WAS ME...

NO...

...NOT ME!

IT'S EITHER **MARY JANE** --

-- OR ONE OF HER FRIENDS!

End

MARVEL COMICS®

JUN
#92

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

MACKIE
ROMITA JR
HANNA

PETER PARKER™ SPIDER-MAN®

IDENTITY CRISIS!

DUSK™

SPIDER-MAN IS A WANTED MAN IN NEW YORK CITY.

BUT, JUST TO PROVE THE OLD CLICHE THAT "TURNABOUT IS FAIR PLAY"...

...SO IS THE TRAPSTER.

AFTER ALL, HE IS THE MAN WHO MURDERED THE SMALL-TIME CROOK NAMED JOEY Z AND FRAMED THE WEB-SLINGER.

SO IT GOES.

SO YOU ARE THE FAMOUS WAITERS?

YOU'RE REALLY MAKING QUITE THE NAME FOR YOURSELVES AS FREELANCE ASSASSINS.

UNFORTUNATELY, I WAS PREPARED FOR YOU.

THAT PUDDLE YOU STUPIDLY STEPPED INTO IS A CONTACT EPOXY.

YOU, GENTLEMEN, ARE TRAPPED!

A LITTLE GLUE ISN'T GOING TO SAVE YOU, TRAPSTER.

NO. BUT MY BUDDY WILL.

© 2017 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. WWW.MARVEL.COM

KRAK

WHAT THE --?

THUD

WHERE IS HE?

PETER PARKER SPIDER-MAN Stan Lee presents

STUCK IN THE MIDDLE WITH YOU!

HOWARD MACKIE / JOHN ROMITA JR. / SCOTT HANNA
STORY & ART

GREGORY WRIGHT
COLORS

RS & COMICRAFT'S KIFF SCHOLL
LETTERS

RALPH MACCHIO
EDITOR

BOB HARRAS
EDITOR IN CHIEF

THE NAME IS DUSK.

OOLPH!

WHAK

WHO IS HE?

THAT'S MY BUDDY!

PUT IT THERE, PAL O' MINE!

WHOA! WHAT'S THAT?

A LITTLE LEFTOVER GLUE!

CAN'T LET GO!

ALL OUTTA SOLVENT!

GOTCHA!

COME ON, DUSK, LIGHTEN UP!

IT DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER THAN THIS!

WE'RE GENUINE *OUTLAWS!*

THE GOOD GUYS HATE US AND THE BAD GUYS WANT US DEAD!

WELL, *ME* AT LEAST.

AND PROBABLY YOU TOO, NOW THAT YOU'VE SIDED WITH ME.

WHATTA YOU SAY WE GO GRAB A BEER?

ANOTHER TIME. I HAVE PERSONAL BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO.

COME ON! WHAT COULD BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN A BREW WITH A BUDDY?

A GIRL.

'NUFF SAID.

CATCH YOU LATER.

GONE?

YOU GOTTA LOVE A GUY THAT CAN DISAPPEAR JUST LIKE THAT.

A SHORT TIME LATER IN QUEENS...

IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T LIKE IT UP NORTH, MARY JANE, BUT THE ***WINTERS*** HERE...

...***AND*** I DO MISS MY FRIENDS BACK IN FLORIDA.

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE BACK TO FLORIDA, ***AUNT ANNA?***

PLANNING? NO.

JUST THINKING WISTFUL THOUGHTS.

AS THEY SAY, "***THE GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER...***"

AFTER MAY PASSED ON, I DECIDED TO STAY HERE AND HELP YOU AND PETER, BUT NOW...

...SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE A FIFTH WHEEL HERE, MARY JANE.

IT'S NOT AS IF YOU AND PETER ARE ***CHILDREN!***

WELL YOU ARE ***HALF*** RIGHT.

PARDON?

SOMETHING YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT?

NO. JUST JOKING.

EXCUSE ME A MINUTE, AUNT ANNA, I LEFT ONE OF MY NOTEBOOKS UPSTAIRS.

TAKE YOUR TIME, DEAR.

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

SEEMS TO ME LIKE YOU'RE TAKING AN AWFUL LOT OF SHOWERS, LATELY, TIGER!

I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU TRY SWINGING AROUND THE CITY IN A SPANDEX COSTUME AND ***NOT*** SHOWER.

AS A MATTER OF FACT I ***WOULD*** LIKE TO SEE THAT!

IT DOESN'T TAKE A PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR, WHICH I AM, TO FIGURE OUT THAT MAYBE IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH YOUR FEELING "*DIRTY*" ABOUT HANGING AROUND WITH THE TRAPSTER.

PLEASE DON'T ANALYZE ME, MJ. I'VE HAD A LONG DAY.

YOU'RE RIGHT, MADAME FREUD, I'M NOT CRAZY ABOUT WHAT I'M DOING. UNDERCOVER WORK WAS NEVER MY STYLE AND IT ***DOES*** MAKE ME FEEL DIRTY.

BUT IT WAS ***ARTHUR STACY'S*** IDEA FOR SPIDER-MAN TO TRY TO GET CLOSE TO THE TRAPSTER BY USING THE DUSK COSTUME.

I'VE GOT TO GET HIM TO TRUST ME ENOUGH TO OPEN UP AND CONFESS ABOUT THE MURDER OF JOEY Z.

BELIEVE ME, MARY JANE, I CAN'T WAIT TO CLEAR MY NAME, GET THE FIVE MILLION DOLLAR BOUNTY NORMAN PLACED ON MY HEAD LIFTED, AND GO BACK TO WEARING THE WEBS.

SPEAKING OF MONEY...

GROAN

WE CAN'T JUST *NOT* THINK ABOUT IT, PETER.

THINGS ARE TIGHT.

WE'VE PRETTY MUCH RUN THROUGH ALL OF OUR SAVINGS AND BETWEEN THE COST OF GRAD SCHOOL FOR YOU AND UNDERGRAD FOR ME...

...NOT TO MENTION THAT WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE HELPING AUNT ANNA OUT WITH THE MORTGAGE ON THE HOUSE.

WE'VE GOT TO FIGURE OUT SOMETHING.

BUT *NOT* TONIGHT.

I'LL TALK TO JONAH AND SEE IF I CAN PICK UP SOME EXTRA ASSIGNMENTS AT THE BUGLE. IT'LL WORK OUT.

WHY SHOULD *YOU* HAVE TO PICK UP THE SLACK?

I *HAVE* BEEN KNOWN TO BE THE WAGE EARNER IN THIS RELATIONSHIP IN THE PAST.

PLEASE, MJ...

...I CAN ONLY DEAL WITH TWELVE TRAGEDIES AT A TIME. I'M EXHAUSTED.

THE NEXT DAY AT THE EMPIRE STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS...

THIS KIND OF SLOPPINESS IS INEXCUSABLE, PARKER!

"SLOPPINESS," PAUL?

YOU CAN CALL ME MISTER STACY, PARKER.

OKAY, Mr. STACY, I SUGGEST YOU GO OVER THE DATA AGAIN AND I ASSURE YOU, YOU WILL FIND THAT MY RESEARCH SUPPORTS THE DATA.

DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH, PARKER. I'VE SEEN BETTER SUPPORTED RESEARCH FROM UNDER-GRADS.

DO IT AGAIN, DOLT!

EXCUSE ME, Mr. PARKER. COULD I HAVE A WORD WITH YOU IN PRIVATE?

SURE, PROFESSOR HOWARD.

PETER, I WAS WONDERING IF YOU ARE HAVING PERSONAL PROBLEMS.

YOUR WORK, AS OF LATE, HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT LESS THAN STELLAR.

IF IT'S ABOUT THE RESEARCH DATA... I CAN EXPLAIN --

I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT. WHATEVER IT IS... TAKE CARE OF IT.

YOU DO ALWAYS HAVE THE OPTION OF LEAVING THE PROJECT IF THE DEMANDS ARE TOO TAXING FOR YOU.

THINK ABOUT IT.

DON'T YOU THINK YOU'RE BEING A BIT HARSH ON THE LAD, MARK?

NORMAN, I --

NOW, NOW, PETER, ***SOMEONE*** HAS TO SPEAK IN YOUR DEFENSE.

THANK YOU, Mr. OSBORN.

MY THANKS TOO, NORMAN, FOR THE SIZABLE DONATION YOU HAVE MADE TO THE NEW SCIENCE BUILDING.

I WOULD DO ANYTHING TO SEE THE FURTHER ENLIGHTENMENT OF FINE YOUNG MEN, SUCH AS PETER.

YOU KNOW, MARK, PETER AND I GO ***WAY*** BACK.

HE AND MY SON HARRY WERE THE BEST OF FRIENDS.

I CAN'T BELIEVE HE CAN GO ON LIKE THAT.

PRESENTING TWO TOTALLY DIFFERENT FACES TO THE WORLD.

SOMETIMES HE MAKES ME WONDER IF IT'S ME THAT'S CRAZY AND NORMAN ISN'T REALLY THE GREEN GOBLIN... ISN'T REALLY EVIL PERSONIFIED.

I LOOK AT PETER AND I AM REMINDED OF ALL THAT HARRY COULD HAVE BEEN.

I WOULD TAKE IT AS A PERSONAL FAVOR IF YOU WOULD TAKE PETER UNDER YOUR WING AND SEE TO IT THAT HE LIVES UP TO HIS POTENTIAL.

OSBORN INDUSTRIES COULD ALWAYS USE A FEW MORE LIKE HIM.

THANK YOU AGAIN, Mr. OSBORN.

I ***HOPE*** I WON'T DISAPPOINT YOU.

LATER THAT NIGHT, AT THE HOME OF ARTHUR STACY...

YOU SEEM TENSE, YOUNG FELLOW.

YEAH. I THINK ALL OF IT'S STARTING TO GET TO ME.

AND THE PROBLEM IS THAT MOST OF THE FUN PART OF MY LIFE RIGHT NOW IS HANGING OUT WITH THE MAN, A MURDERER, WHO FRAMED ME.

SO, WHAT'S WITH THE TAPE RECORDER?

I DIDN'T THINK THIS SORT OF RECORDING WOULD BE ADMISSIBLE IN COURT.

YOU'D BE SURPRISED WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH INADMISSIBLE EVIDENCE. TRUST ME. IT'S WHAT I DO.

DAD! I --

JILL... Er... I CAN EXPLAIN. I...

EXPLAIN WHAT?

Er... I... Er...

...I MEAN... I ***WANT*** AN EXPLANATION OF WHAT YOU'RE DOING BARGING INTO MY OFFICE, YOUNG LADY. YOU LEARNED BETTER THAN THAT WHEN YOU WERE A TODDLER.

SORRY, DAD, BUT IT'S ABOUT PAUL.

HE ISN'T TAKING HIS MEDICATION AND --

AND IT'S ***NONE*** OF ANYBODY'S BUSINESS.

I WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE, NO, I ***INSIST***, THAT YOU, LITTLE SISTER... AND YOU, DEAR FATHER... STAY OUT OF MY LIFE.

I KNOW I LIVE UNDER YOUR ROOF, BUT THAT IS TEMPORARY AT BEST.

I'M GETTING MY AFFAIRS IN ORDER AND AM PREPARING TO MAKE CHANGES.

SO, FROM NOW ON, LET'S JUST IGNORE EACH OTHER.

THAT WILL BE THE BEST FOR ALL OF US.

DADDY, WE'VE GOT TO...

THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO... AND THERE HASN'T BEEN FOR YEARS, DEAR.

YOU KNOW THAT. PAUL IS... WELL, HE IS ***PAUL.***

NOW, WHAT ABOUT YOU? ARE YOU FEELING WELL?

I'M FINE, BUT... HAVE YOU FOUND OUT ANYTHING MORE ABOUT THIS JOEY Z. AND HIS CONNECTION TO SPIDER-MAN? I FEEL AS THOUGH WE ARE SO CLOSE TO UNCOVERING A CLUE TO HIS INVOLVEMENT IN COUSIN GWEN'S DEATH.

JILL, PLEASE STOP THIS OBSESSION. I WANT YOU TO TAKE IT EASY. THE DOCTOR SAID YOU'VE BEEN OVERDOING IT TOO SOON AFTER YOUR GUNSHOT.

BUT --

NO! REST. NOW.

MAYBE THIS ISN'T A GOOD IDEA... YOU HELPING ME WITH ALL THAT IS GOING ON.

MAYBE...

MAYBE ***NOTHING.*** PLEASE DON'T FORCE ME TO DEAL WITH ***YOU*** AS ONE OF MY ERRANT CHILDREN.

YOU HAVE ENOUGH CONCERNS OF YOUR OWN, YOUNG MAN, LET'S ATTEND TO THE TRAPSTER FIRST. THEN... WE'LL TALK ABOUT MY FAMILY AND OUR PROBLEMS.

AND HOW ***MAYBE*** YOU CAN HELP US.

A SHORT TIME LATER...

MAN! OSBORN HAS GOT A LOT OF CLOUT IN THIS TOWN!

ACTUALLY, MOST OF THESE MOOKS PROBABLY DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO'S PUTTING UP THE MONEY FOR THE CONTRACT ON MY HEAD.

SO WHAT EXACTLY DID OSBORN DO TO YOU THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO HELP ME?

I DON'T WISH TO TALK ABOUT IT.

THAT BAD, Huh? I CAN BELIEVE IT ABOUT OSBORN.

I'VE MET SOME PRETTY DANGEROUS PEOPLE IN MY LINE OF WORK AND, LET ME TELL YOU, OSBORN SCARES ME.

LET'S FORGET HIM! I'LL BUY YOU THAT DRINK I OWE YOU.

I DON'T KNOW... I ***WON'T*** TAKE OFF MY MASK AND --

WHAT? DID OSBORN SCAR YOU OR SOMETHING? DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. THE PLACE I'M TAKING YOU TO... NO ONE IS GOING TO CARE.

A SHORT TIME LATER...

DON'T GET ME WRONG, I APPRECIATE ALL YOU'VE BEEN DOING, BUT YOU DON'T SEEM THE TYPE OF GUY WHO NEEDS TO BE SHOWN THE ROPES.

IF YOU REALLY WANT TO GO AFTER OSBORN LIKE YOU SAID... WHY NOT JUST DO IT? HE'D ***NEVER*** SEE YOU COMING.

YOU COULD PUT HIM OUT OF ***BOTH*** OUR MISERIES.

YOU KNOW OSBORN. HE'S CAGEY. I WANT TO LEARN FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE.

MY EXPERIENCE?

IF I KNEW SO MUCH, I'D HAVE STUCK WITH THE RESEARCH CHEMISTRY GAME --

-- AND PATENTED SOME OF THE EPOXIES I'VE COOKED UP OVER THE YEARS.

BUT YOU WOULDN'T HAVE GUESSED THAT PETE PETRUSKI WAS A SCIENCE GEEK, WOULD YA?

IT'S AMAZING HOW ONE LITTLE ACCIDENT CAN CHANGE OUR LIVES FOREVER, Huh?

YES... IT IS.

YOU LIKE THE LIFE?

IT'S GOT ITS MOMENTS.

GET TO MAKE YOUR OWN HOURS AND, FOR THE MOST PART, YOU DON'T ANSWER TO ***ANYONE***, BUT SOMETIMES I WONDER...

HOW YOUR LIFE MIGHT HAVE TURNED OUT IF YOU HAD JUST STUCK TO THE SCIENCE?

SPOKEN LIKE A MAN WHO'S BEEN THERE.

MAYBE.

IN ALL THE YEARS YOU'VE BEEN DOING THIS, HAVE YOU EVER DONE ANY-THING THAT YOU'VE REGRETTED?

I DON'T KNOW... MAYBE.

I'D HAVE TO THINK ABOUT THAT ONE, BUT...

HEY! YOU UP FOR A LITTLE FUN?

PERHAPS.

GETTING REAL FORMAL ALL OF A SUDDEN, Huh? GUESS IT FITS WITH THE SUIT. ANYWAY, TRUST ME.

NOT LIKELY. BUT I'M FINALLY GETTING THE HANG OF THE DUSK PERSONA -- MYSTERIOUS, SUBTLE...

NOT QUITE AS FORMAL AS PRODIGY, THOUGH. THINK THE SHADOW...

A SHORT TIME LATER, ON MANHATTAN'S UPPER WEST SIDE...

YOU'RE GOING TO LOVE THIS TRICK, BUDDY.

A LITTLE SOLVENT...

...A LITTLE GLUE.

AND NOW, MY STRENGTH-ENHANCED FRIEND, IF YOU'D PLEASE...

EXCUSE ME?

COME ON! YOU SHOULD KNOW BY NOW THAT IT ISN'T ALL GLUE WITH ME.

ANYTHING THAT'S HELD TOGETHER CAN COME UNDONE. SO PLEASE PULL THE WALL TOWARD US, WITH THAT STRENGTH OF YOURS, AND TRY TO BE QUIET ABOUT IT.

WHAT --

SHHHH!

YOU'LL SEE IN A MINUTE.

YOU'RE GOING TO LOVE THIS.

HANG BACK A SECOND.

I CAN HANDLE THESE TWO.

SPLAT

KRAK

ALMOST THERE.

WHEN WE GET THERE, ALL I WANT IS FOR YOU TO COVER MY BACK.

DON'T WORRY, BUDDY, I'M GOING TO HANDLE IT ALL... FOR BOTH OF US.

IT'S TIME FOR *ME* TO REPAY *YOU* FOR EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE FOR ME.

THERE HE IS. THE MAN HIMSELF.

LOOK AT HIM. ALL HIGH AND MIGHTY.

HE PASSES HIMSELF OFF TO THE WORLD AS A BIG SHOT PHILANTHROPIST BUSINESSMAN...

...WHEN HE'S NOTHING MORE THAN A COLD-BLOODED KILLER AT HEART.

BET YOU HE'S SIGNING SOME-BODY'S DEATH WARRANT RIGHT NOW.

WHILE HE'S STILL BREATHING...

...MY LIFE ISN'T WORTH SQUAT.

CAN'T HAVE THAT, CAN WE?

OSBORN!

DID YOU MISS ME, NORMAN?

THIS IS SOMETHING TO WHICH I HAVE TO ATTEND.

I BELIEVE WE ARE DONE FOR NOW. THERE'S NO REASON FOR YOU TO TROUBLE YOURSELF WITH THIS MATTER. PROCEED WITH THE PLAN AS OUTLINED.

WE *WILL* SPEAK AGAIN.

DON'T TURN YOUR BACK ON ME AGAIN, OSBORN!

WHAT *IS IT*, PASTE POT?

DON'T CALL ME THAT!

OR *WHAT?* DO I DETECT AN IMPLIED THREAT? PERHAPS THE VAPORS OF YOUR GLUES ARE GETTING TO YOU.

YOU REALLY ARE AN IRRITATION, PETRUSKI.

I HIRE YOU TO PERFORM ONE TASK FOR ME, YOU DO IT, AND NOW YOU'RE SURPRISED THAT I WANT NO WITNESSES?

WHAT AN AMATEUR.

YOU LOOK AT ME, OSBORN! I WANT YOU TO SEE THIS COMING!

WHY WOULD I DO THAT WHEN YOUR NAIVETE DISGUSTS ME SO?

CLK CLK

DID YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT I WAS NOT HAVING YOUR ***EVERY*** MOVE MONITORED? THAT I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU HERE?

THESE ARE Q-4. YOU MAY HAVE HEARD OF THEM?

AN ELITE TEAM OF RUSSIAN NATIONALS. THEY SPEAK NO ENGLISH, SO YOUR THREATS WILL MEAN NOTHING TO ***THEM*** EITHER.

YOU ARE PATHETIC.

WHY CAN NO ONE DIE LIKE A MAN THESE DAYS?

THE ONLY MAN I'VE CROSSED PATHS WITH LATELY WHO DID NOT DISAPPOINT ME WAS JOEY Z.

CLK CLK CLK

HE AT LEAST SERVED MY PURPOSES TO THE FULLEST.

HIS DEATH WAS A WORK OF ART. HAVING YOU KILL HIM AND MAKING IT LOOK AS IF SPIDER-MAN WAS THE KILLER WAS A STROKE OF GENIUS ON MY PART.

KEEP TALKING, NORMAN. I'M GETTING IT ***ALL*** ON TAPE.

YOU COULD HAVE RUN, PETER. LIVED QUITE NICELY ON THAT WHICH I PAID YOU. BUT YOU CHOSE TO STICK AROUND. HOW COULD I TRUST YOU TO KEEP YOUR LIPS SEALED? I COULDN'T, SO...

...GOOD-BYE.

Ah! IT APPEARS THAT YOU'RE NOT AS FOOLISH AS I HAD BEEN LEAD TO BELIEVE, PETER.

SO THIS IS WHO'S BEEN PROTECTING YOU.

I DON'T BELIEVE I'VE HAD THE PLEASURE.

THE STRONG SILENT TYPE.

YOU'RE A DEAD MAN, OSBORN.

YOU'LL HAVE TO FORGIVE ME FOR NOT TREMBLING, BUT...

...*DEATH* DOESN'T SCARE ME.

BEING ***BORED*** ON THE OTHER HAND...

I'LL *TRY* NOT TO BORE YOU, OSBORN. YOU KNOW IT'S *MY* KIND, THE GUYS IN THE SPANDEX, THAT GET LABELED WITH THE SUPER-VILLAIN MONIKER, BUT IT'S GUYS LIKE *YOU*, OSBORN...

...THE ONES WHO WEAR THE EXPENSIVE SUITS AND ORDER DEATH LIKE YOU DO A MARTINI...

...YOU'RE THE REAL VILLAINS! THE REAL *MONSTERS!*

YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHO YOU'RE -- *MMMPH!*

I'M SORRY, OSBORN... WHAT WAS THAT? I COULDN'T HEAR YOU!

AS A MATTER OF FACT, JOEY Z SAID SOMETHING SIMILAR THE LAST TIME I RAN INTO HIM.

TRAPSTER, DON'T --

BACK OFF! I'M DOING THIS FOR *BOTH* OF US!

YOU TELLING ME YOU ***DON'T*** WANT HIM DEAD NOW?

FOR ***WHATEVER*** IT IS HE DID TO YOU?

WE KILL HIM AND ***WE'RE*** THE UNSUNG HEROES IN THIS TOWN!

MORE THAN ***ANYONE*** WILL EVER KNOW!

YOU ARE EITHER WITH ME, OR...

...YOU DIE RIGHT NEXT TO HIM!

NEITHER THING IS GOING TO HAPPEN, PETER! YOU CANNOT THREATEN ONE WHO BLENDS WITH THE SHADOWS.

LOOK -- SPARE ME THE SPOOKY DOUBLE-TALK! BOTTOM LINE IS -- I THOUGHT WE WERE PALS!

KRAK

WE ARE, BUT I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU BE A KILLER! THAT IS NOT WHY DUSK SHROUDS THE CITY.

MORON, I *AM* A KILLER! I *KILLED* THAT LOWLIFE JOEY Z AND FRAMED SPIDER-MAN.

AND I'D DO IT AGAIN!

SORRY TO HEAR THAT...YOU MUST BE TAKEN DOWN.

KRAK

CLAP CLAP

BRAVO.

WHILE I APPRECIATE YOUR EFFORTS ON MY BEHALF, I ASSURE YOU THEY WEREN'T NECESSARY.

NOW...PERHAPS I COULD PERSUADE YOU TO DISPOSE OF HIM IN, SHALL WE SAY, A MORE PERMANENT MANNER?

NO?

NO MATTER. NO ONE WILL BELIEVE HIM ANYWAY.

BY THE WAY, IF YOU'RE *EVER* SEEKING GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT...

...I'M LISTED IN THE LOCAL PHONE BOOK.

THE RECORDER... CRUSHED!

OSBORN'S CONFESSION... EVERYTHING... GONE!

YOU WERE MY FRIEND AND NOW YOU'VE SIGNED MY DEATH WARRANT. HE'LL FIND ME... AND HE'LL HAVE ME KILLED.

THERE IS A WAY TO STRIKE BACK AT HIM. A WAY TO MAKE THINGS SO DIFFICULT FOR HIM THAT HE WON'T HAVE TIME TO THINK ABOUT YOU.

YEAH? HOW?

I KILLED JOEY Z.

SPIDER-MAN HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.

THERE YOU ARE, ANN. THE TRAPSTER, IN A SURPRISE PRESS CONFERENCE, HAS CONFESSED TO FRAMING SPIDER-MAN FOR MURDER.

POLICE STILL SUSPECT HE WAS WORKING UNDER ORDERS FROM SOMEONE ELSE, BUT HE IS GIVING THEM NOTHING MORE.

THANKS, CARL.

AND WE HAVE RECEIVED WORD THAT POLICE LAB RESULTS SUPPORT THE TRAPSTER'S CONFESSION. THE GLUE USED IN THE MURDER DOES NOT MATCH SPIDER-MAN'S WEBBING.

THOUGH REPRESENTATIVES OF NORMAN OSBORN HAVE SAID THEY SUSPECT THAT THE TRAPSTER AND SPIDER-MAN WERE WORKING IN COLLUSION --

OF **COURSE** THEY DO.

WHY DIDN'T HE JUST NAME OSBORN?

CLIK

BECAUSE THAT'S A BARGAINING CHIP HE DOESN'T WANT TO GIVE UP JUST YET.

THE TRAPSTER IS NO DUMMY.

YOU SOUND LIKE YOU ALMOST ADMIRE HIM, PETER.

DO I? I DON'T KNOW... I --

I'M GOING TO TAKE A SHOWER.

A **LONG** ONE.

END

MARVEL COMICS

JUN #258

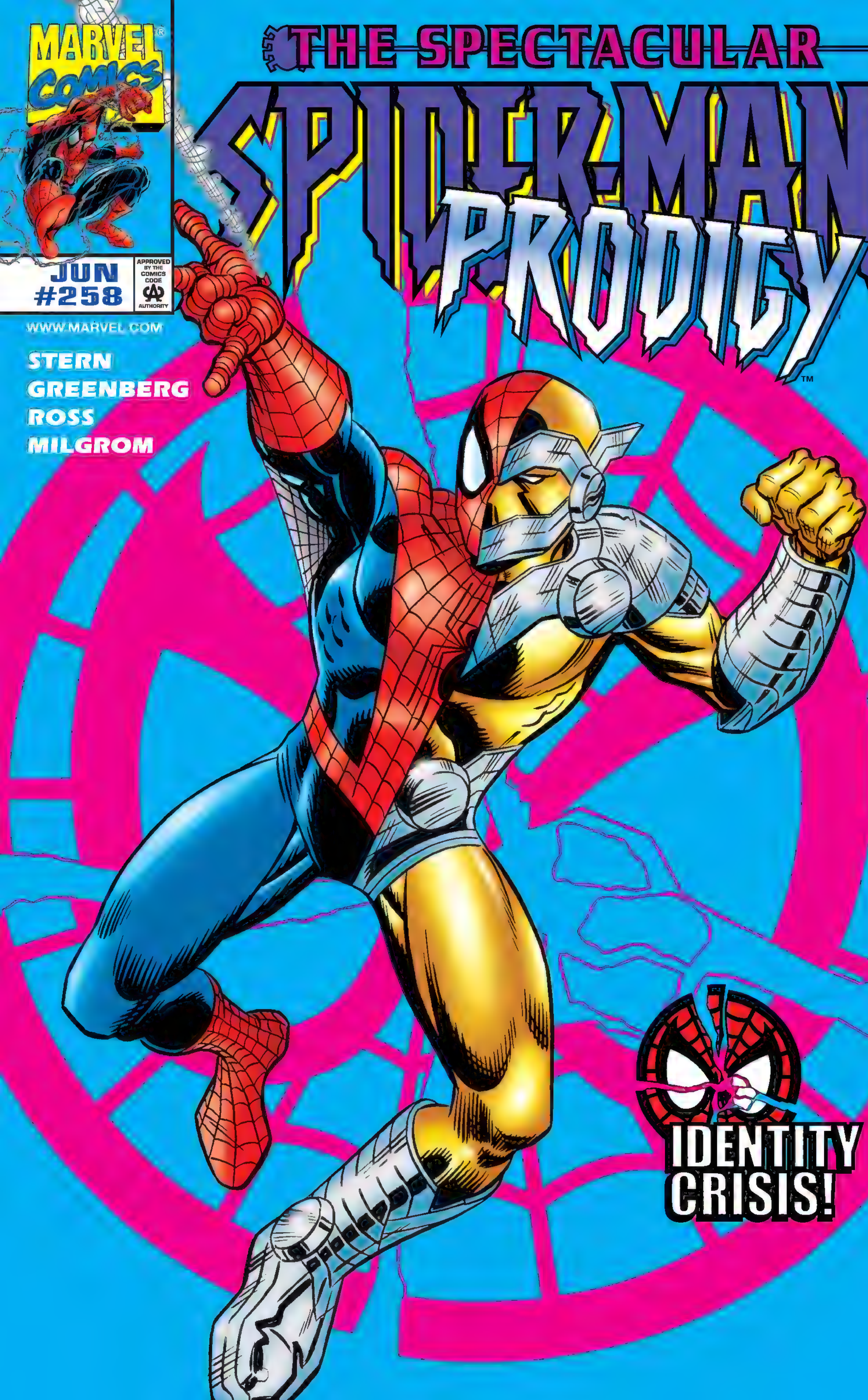
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

WWW.MARVEL.COM

STERN
GREENBERG
ROSS
MILGROM

THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN

P.RODIGY™



IDENTITY CRISIS!

STAN LEE PRESENTS: THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN -- ER, PRODIGY!

MAN OF THE PEOPLE

GREAT SCOTT! I KNEW TO EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED WHEN DEALING WITH THE LIKES OF ***JACK O'LANTERN*** AND ***CONUNDRUM*** --

-- BUT I WASN'T EXPECTING ***THIS!***

GLENN GREENBERG INCOMING WRITER	LUKE ROSS PENCILS	AL MILGROM INKER	JOHN KALISZ COLORS	RS & COMICRAFT'S KIFF SCHOLL LETTERS	RALPH MACCHIO WASTE	BOB HARRAS EDITOR IN CHIEF

SPECIAL THANKS TO JOHN MARC DEMATTEIS

© 2017 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. WWW.MARVEL.COM

YOU CAN EXPECT EVEN *WORSE*, PRODIGY --

ONCE WE GET OUR *HANDS* ON YOU!

NOW *THIS* IS A STICKY SITUATION!

AND I THOUGHT IT WAS TOUGH GIVING UP BEING *SPIDER-MAN!*

THAT FIVE MILLION DOLLAR REWARD POSTED BY *NORMAN OSBORN* FOR SPIDER-MAN'S HEAD HAS MADE IT *IMPOSSIBLE* FOR *PETER PARKER* TO REMAIN THE WEB-SLINGER --

-- SO I'VE HAD TO ADOPT *OTHER* COSTUMED IDENTITIES -- THE HORNET, RICOCHET, DUSK, AND THIS *LAST* IDENTITY -- THE SQUARE-JAWED, SQUEAKY-CLEAN *PRODIGY* -- TO STAY IN THE SUPER-HERO BIZ!

ARGH! *MISSED* HIM!

YOUR REFLEXES ARE SLOWING DOWN IN YOUR OLD AGE, JACK, BUT *I'LL* --

-- NO! HE'S TOO *FAST!*

Hah! STILL STICKIN' YOUR FOOT INTO YOUR MOUTH, AREN'T YA, CONUNDRUM?

SEE RECENT ISSUES OF ALL THE **SPIDER-MAN** TITLES! – Researchin' Ralf.

YOU KNOW, FELLOWS, BETWEEN CONUNDRUM KIDNAPPING THE DAUGHTER OF THE SUFINDIAN AMBASSADOR --

-- THEN DEMANDING THE PRICELESS SUFINIDIAN RUBY KNOWN AS THE *HAND OF MUMTHAZI* IN EXCHANGE FOR HER --

IT HAPPENED LAST ISSUE! – Reiteratin' Ralf.

-- AND THEN JACK HERE COMING ALONG AND ***STEALING*** THE HAND FROM THE MUSEUM WHERE IT WAS BEING KEPT, YOU TWO HAVE STIRRED UP QUITE A ***RUCKUS!***

PRETTY ***IMPRESSIVE,*** IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF!

THE AMBASSADOR HIMSELF WAS SUPPOSED TO MEET ME IN THIS CLOSED-DOWN PUB --

-- TO DISCUSS ***NEW*** TERMS FOR THE RELEASE OF HIS DAUGHTER. BUT I FIND THE TWO OF YOU HERE ***INSTEAD!*** I WOULD EXPECT SUCH INTERFERENCE FROM JACK O'LANTERN --

-- BUT WHO ARE ***YOU,*** PRODIGY? WHAT'S ***YOUR*** STAKE IN ALL THIS?

ME? I'M JUST A LITTLE GUY TRYING TO DO THE RIGHT THING!

Uh... A ***VERY*** LITTLE GUY, IT WOULD SEEM!

YOU'VE HAD FAR TOO MUCH ROOM TO ***MANEUVER*** IN HERE, PRODIGY --

-- BUT THAT'S EASILY ***RECTIFIED!***

THEY'VE GROWN EVEN ***LARGER!*** HOW DO THEY ***DO*** THAT?

AND HOW THE HECK DO THEY GET THEIR ***COSTUMES*** TO GROW ***WITH*** THEM?!

Uh-Oh! CAN'T ***EVADE*** THEM ANY LONGER --

GOTCHA!

AUHLP!

BWA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

GOOD WORK, JACK!

OF COURSE! THE POOR SAP NEVER HAD A *CHANCE!*

CAN'T... BREAK OUT OF... HIS GRIP!

NN... I'M NOT THROUGH WITH YOU, YET...

Oh, BUT I'M THROUGH WITH *YOU*, PRODIGY!

YOU'RE A *PROBLEM* -- A *MINOR* ONE, TO BE SURE, BUT A PROBLEM NONETHE-LESS!

AN' WHEN IT COMES TO PROBLEMS, MAD JACK ALWAYS SAYS --

-- EAT 'EM AN' *SMILE!*

WHAT THE --?!

Oh BOY...

MEANWHILE, AT THE SUFINDIAN EMBASSY...

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY AND FRIENDSHIP, NORMAN...

...I WOULD GO MAD WITHOUT YOU HERE, KEEPING ME GROUNDED! I AM WORRIED AND SICK ABOUT MY DAUGHTER!

MY BEAUTIFUL TABRIAZ...

THIS MYSTERIOUS "PRODIGY" PERSON -- HOW DO WE KNOW WE CAN TRUST HIM TO RESCUE HER, AS HE PROMISED?

HE SEEMED GENUINELY SINCERE IN HIS DESIRE TO BRING TABRIAZ BACK TO YOU, HAZRAM.

AND YOU KNOW YOU CAN ALSO COUNT ON ME TO PROVIDE ALL THE RESOURCES AT MY DISPOSAL TO SAVE YOUR LOVELY DAUGHTER, OLD FRIEND.

WHAT DO YOU REALLY THINK, Mr. OSBORN? CAN THIS PRODIGY GUY PULL IT OFF?

WELL, EUGENE...

...I MUST ADMIT I KNOW VIRTUALLY NOTHING ABOUT HIM. BUT I KNOW EARNSTNESS AND HONESTY WHEN I SEE IT.

HE'LL DO HIS VERY BEST. I'M SURE OF IT.

I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT, Mr. OSBORN.

HAVE A LITTLE FAITH, EUGENE, MY BOY -- THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR ANOTHER HERO IN THE WORLD!

I ALSO KNOW RIDICULOUS NAIVETE WHEN I SEE IT -- AND THIS PRODIGY SEEMS TO BE BRIMMING WITH IT!

I FULLY INTEND TO PUT THAT TO GOOD USE..!

ELSEWHERE...

CAN'T GET MY ***BEARINGS!*** WHERE ***AM*** I? WHAT DID JACK O'LANTERN ***DO*** TO ME?

THE FLAMES ARE ***LICKING*** AT ME, REACHING OUT TO ***GRAB*** ME!

AND I JUST KEEP PLUMMETING DOWN THIS SEEMINGLY ***BOTTOMLESS*** PIT!

BUT -- THIS CAN'T ***REALLY*** BE HAPPENING!

"I'VE FACED JACK BEFORE, AS SPIDER-MAN -- AND HE HAS A ***HISTORY*** OF SCREWING WITH PEOPLE'S ***MINDS*** --

"-- MAKING THEM SEE THINGS THAT AREN'T REALLY THERE AND EXPERIENCE THINGS THAT AREN'T REALLY HAPPENING!"

DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THIS ***CONUNDRUM*** CHARACTER, BUT HE SEEMS TO HAVE A ROUTINE THAT'S ***SIMILAR*** TO JACK'S!

I'M WILLING TO BET THAT THIS IS ALL ONE BIG ***MIND-TRICK,*** THAT THESE TWO NUTCASES AREN'T ***REALLY*** GIANTS!

BUT HOW CAN I COMBAT WHAT MY OWN SENSES ARE TELLING ME IS ***REALITY?*** IT'S LIKE FIGHTING MYSTERIO!

MY ***SENSES*** -- THAT'S ***IT!***

I'M FREE!

AAGH!

SPLORR

GOT SO WRAPPED UP PLAYING THE ROLE OF PRODIGY THAT I ALMOST FORGOT HOW IMPORTANT MY SENSES REALLY *ARE* IN SITUATIONS LIKE THIS!

SPECIFICALLY, MY *SPIDER-SENSE!*

I CAN'T RELY ON WHAT MY EYES ARE TELLING ME! HAVE TO *CLOSE* THEM, TAKE THEM *OUT* OF THE MIX --

-- USE MY SPIDER-SENSE TO *GUIDE* ME AND EVEN UP THE ODDS!

NOW, ARE YOU GENTLEMEN WILLING TO *COOPERATE* WITH ME --

-- OR DO I HAVE TO GET *ROUGH?*

MY CHEST -- ON *FIRE!* HOW -- HOW DID HE *DO* THAT...?

NEVER MIND THAT, JACK! OUR ILLUSIONS DON'T SEEM TO BE WORKING AGAINST HIM ANY MORE!

WE HAVE TO COME UP WITH *ANOTHER* PLAN OF ATTACK!

J-JUST NEED A FEW MOMENTS -- TO *RECOVER* --!

JUST REMEMBER --

-- I TRIED TO GO EASY ON YOU!

JUST GOTTA KEEP MY EYES CLOSED -- LET MY SPIDER-SENSE GUIDE ME THROUGH THIS!

URK--!

WAP

ROOF

UNGH!

ALL RIGHT, JACK, START FLAPPING YOUR GUMS -- WHEREVER THEY ARE!

WHERE'S THE AMBASSADOR'S DAUGHTER?

WHY DON'T YA ASK CONUNDRUM? HE'S THE ONE WHO SNATCHED HER! I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT!

CONUNDRUM --

BLAST YOU, JACK!

YOU STOLE THE HAND OF MUMTHAZI -- WHICH IS WHAT I'M REALLY AFTER!

THANKS FOR THAT OUTBURST, OLD FRIEND! IT WAS ENOUGH TO DISTRACT PRODIGY, ALLOWING ME TO CATCH HIM OFF-GUARD!

SIC HIM, MAGUIRE!

MRROW!

HEY!

MRRORW

AAACK! N-NOW COME ON, LITTLE FELLA!

I'LL GIVE YOU A NICE BIG BOWL OF MILK IF YOU'LL JUST TAKE YOUR CLAWS OUT OF MY FACE!

HSSSSS

HRAAARR

Oh -- MY NOSE!

SPLOTCH

DOWN, KITTY!

FAREWELL, PRODIGY! UNTIL OUR PATHS CROSS AGAIN!

FWOOSH

JACK'S GETTING AWAY! GOTTA LET THE KITTY DOWN EASY...

MRRORW

WHUMP

COME, MAGUIRE! WE'RE LEAVING!

MRROWR

GOTTA STOP THEM BEFORE --

-- NUTS! THEY'RE GONE!

I HATE IT WHEN HE DOES THAT.

THIS HAS BEEN A MOST MEMORABLE ENCOUNTER, PRODIGY --

-- BUT I'M AFRAID I MUST TAKE MY LEAVE AS WELL.

THE SWIRLING INCENSE SMOKE -- HE'S GONNA USE IT TO COVER HIM AS HE MAKES HIS ESCAPE --!

NO WAY, CONUNDRUM!

YOU'RE MINE!

A FALSE **NOSE**? HOW **NARCISSISTIC!**

THAT'S A LAUGH, COMING FROM SOMEONE WHO CHANGES HIS LOOK EVERY FEW **SECONDS!**

THE AMBASSADOR'S DAUGHTER -- WHERE **IS** SHE?

URK! I -- I DON'T EVEN **WANT** THE GIRL!

ALL I WANT IS THE HAND OF MUMTHAZI!

*IT'S SAID TO HAVE MYSTICAL POWERS THAT WILL GRANT THE ONE WHO POSSESES IT ANYTHING **IMAGINABLE!***

*JACK O' LANTERN HAS IT, PRODIGY! BUT I'LL HELP YOU **CAPTURE** HIM, BRING HIM DOWN ONCE AND FOR ALL, IN **EXCHANGE** FOR IT!*

*AND I **PROMISE** YOU -- I'LL SHARE ITS SECRETS WITH YOU, ONCE IT'S MINE!*

*WHAT DO YOU SAY, PRODIGY? WORK WITH ME -- AND GAIN POWER LIKE YOU'VE NEVER **DREAMED** OF!*

I -- Uh -- HMMM...

...WELL, LET'S SEE...

...SINCE MY GOAL ALL ALONG HAS BEEN TO GET THE GIRL BACK SAFE AND SOUND, AND ***YOU'RE*** THE ONE WHO HAS HER --

WHAMP

-- I THINK I CAN PUT JACK O'LANTERN OFF TILL ***LATER!***

OOOF!

NOW, ARE YOU FINALLY GOING TO ***COOPERATE***, OR DO I START TAKING YOUR ***FACE*** APART --

-- PIECE BY PIECE?

SOON...

STEADY, GUYS -- I THINK I HEAR THE FRONT DOOR OPENING...

YOU'RE RIGHT! SOME-ONE'S COMIN' OUT...

IT'S -- IT'S THAT ***PRODIGY*** GUY!

OFFICERS, I BELIEVE ***THIS*** BELONGS TO ***YOU!***

HE CALLS HIMSELF CONUNDRUM.

SO, ***THIS*** IS CONUNDRUM! THANKS, PRODIGY!

AND THANKS FOR THAT ***TIP*** YOU CALLED IN TO US, LETTIN' US KNOW TO COME HERE! GOOD WORK, PAL!

DON'T THANK ***ME***, SIR! YOU GENTS ARE THE ***REAL*** HEROES IN THIS TOWN!

HEY! WAY TO GO, PRODIGY!

YOU'RE REALLY MAKIN' A NAME FOR YOURSELF IN THIS TOWN, Huh, DUDE?

Ah, MY YOUNG FRIEND FROM THE *PRESS*...

*FOOLS! DID YOU **TRULY** THINK YOU COULD HOLD ME LIKE A COMMON THUG?!*

⍩KAFF! KAFF!⍩ *SMOKE!* CAN'T *BREATHE!* ⍩KAFF!⍩

HE'S -- ⍩KAFF! KAFF!⍩ GETTIN' *FREE!* ⍩KAFF!⍩

EXCUSE ME, CHUM -- DUTY CALLS!

SURE, MAN! GO TO IT!

OUR PATHS SHALL CROSS AGAIN, PRODIGY!

*BUT FOR NOW, I HAVE BUSINESS **ELSEWHERE!***

HE'S TRYING TO PULL THAT VANISHING ACT AGAIN!

JUST GOTTA SHUT MY EYES --

-- AND LET MY SPIDER SENSE DO ITS THING!

AAACK!

WAP

I HOPE YOUR BUSINESS IS IN A PRISON CELL AT RIKER'S ISLAND, CONUNDRUM --

-- BECAUSE THAT'S THE ONLY PLACE *YOU'RE* GOING!

Uhnn...

THUD

WE'VE GOT HIM! THANKS AGAIN, PRODIGY!

MY PLEASURE!

FANTASTIC!

I'M --

BILLY WALTERS, FROM THE *DAILY BUGLE*. I REMEMBER YOU, CHUM.

YOU *DO?* COOL!

I'D LOVE TO STAY AND CHAT WITH YOU, BILLY, BUT THERE'S A FRIGHTENED GIRL OUT THERE WHO NEEDS MY HELP!

AND NOW THAT CONUNDRUM HAS GIVEN UP HER ***LOCATION***, IT'S TIME TO FLY!

I HEAR YOU! BUT CAN I AT LEAST GET A ***QUOTE*** FROM YOU, FOLLOWING YOUR CAPTURE OF CONUNDRUM?

A QUOTE..?

SURE, PAL. MY QUOTE IS: *"YOU CAN REST A LITTLE **EASIER** FROM NOW ON, NEW YORK --"*

"-- PRODIGY IS ON THE JOB!"

WOW!

YOU *SAID* IT, KID! MAYBE THE *AVENGERS* CAN SIGN HIM UP..!

A SHORT TIME LATER...

WHOEVER CONUNDRUM IS, HE'S PRETTY ***INTENSE!*** THIS HIDEOUT OF HIS IS ***WILD!***

I GUESS HE'S AN EXPERT ON EASTERN MYSTICISM AND ASIAN ART -- OR HE'S JUST LISTENED TO TOO MANY RAVI SHANKAR ALBUMS OVER THE YEARS!

SO WHERE THE HECK IS THE AMBASSADOR'S DAUGHTER?

THOSE COPS WERE A ***RIOT.*** WONDER WHAT THEY'D SAY IF THEY LEARNED THAT THEY WERE SINGING THE PRAISES OF ***SPIDER-MAN*** --

-- NEW YORK'S CURRENT *"PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE"!*

THAT ***CONTROL LEVER*** CONUNDRUM TOLD ME ABOUT SHOULD BE AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE...

Ah -- ***HERE*** IT IS!

SUDDENLY, *AN ORNATE GOLDEN CAGE DESCENDS FROM THE CEILING TO REVEAL --*

Uh...MISS ***TABRIAZ CHALIZ,*** I PRESUME?

Y-YES! WHO -- WHO ARE ***YOU?*** WHAT DO YOU ***WANT*** FROM ME?!

SHE'S, Uh... WELL, SHE'S DOWNRIGHT ***GORGEOUS!*** AND I FEEL REALLY GUILTY FOR ***NOTICING!***

SKREEECHUNK

THE NAME IS PRODIGY, MISS -- AND I'M HERE TO ***RESCUE*** YOU!

CONUNDRUM IS IN CUSTODY. YOU'RE SAFE NOW. I'LL GET YOU BACK TO YOUR PARENTS AND --

YOU'RE *WONDERFUL!*

Oh, THANK YOU, THANK YOU! WHAT A ***HERO*** YOU ARE!

HOW COME I NEVER GOT A RECEPTION LIKE THIS WHEN I WAS SPIDER-MAN?

SMEK

AND WHERE WERE YOU WHEN I WAS ***SINGLE?!***

Uh, OKAY, MISS CHALIZ, LET'S GET YOU BACK HO --

Uh-Oh -- MY SPIDER-SENSE IS TINGLING!

WHAT -- WHAT IS THE MATTER?

BWA HA HA

TROUBLE!

NICE JOB ON CONUNDRUM, HERO! SAVED ME THE TROUBLE OF DEALIN' WITH HIM ***MYSELF!***

YOU'RE EVEN MORE FORMIDABLE THAN I THOUGHT -- ***ISN'T*** HE, MAGUIRE?

MARAUDER

BUT I'M NOT THE ***PUSHOVER*** THAT CONUNDRUM IS! I WON'T FALL SO ***EASILY!***

ESPECIALLY SINCE I POSSESS THE *HAND OF MUMTHAZI!*

THE LEGENDS OF ITS INCREDIBLE MYSTICAL POWERS ARE QUITE *TRUE!*

WHAT DO YOU *WANT*, JACK?

THE *GIRL*, PRODIGY! *SHE'S* WHAT I'VE BEEN AFTER ALL ALONG! NEITHER CONUNDRUM -- NOR *YOU* -- WILL STAND IN MY WAY ANY LONGER!

SO, SPORT, LET'S SEE HOW YOU FARE WHEN I UNLEASH THIS JEWEL'S MYSTICAL ENERGIES UPON YOU AT *FULL FORCE!*

BLAM

MRRORW

WHO --?!

JACK!

THUD

UNGHNN...

WHUMP

GOOD SHOT, KENNETH! I WAS AFRAID WE'D GOTTEN HERE TOO LATE TO *HELP!*

NO PROBLEM, Mr. OSBORN.

EXCELLENT WORK, PRODIGY! I *KNEW* I WAS RIGHT TO HAVE FAITH IN YOU AND YOUR ABILITIES!

ONE OF MY REPORTERS, BILLY WALTERS, PHONED IN TO THE BUGLE THAT CONUNDRUM HAD BEEN CAPTURED, AND THAT ***YOU*** HAD COME HERE TO RESCUE TABRIAZ. I WAS ALERTED ***IMMEDIATELY.***

THE AMBASSADOR AND HIS FAMILY HAVE BEEN DEAR FRIENDS OF MINE FOR YEARS!

THEY WERE AMONG THE FEW WHO KNEW OF MY PRESENCE IN EUROPE DURING THE TIME WHEN I WAS SUPPOSEDLY ***DEAD.***

I WANTED TO BE PRESENT FOR THE DEAR GIRL'S DRAMATIC ***RESCUE.***

MY BODYGUARDS AND I ARRIVED JUST AS THIS OUTLANDISH LUNATIC MADE HIS PRESENCE KNOWN.

SEEING AS HOW HE WAS ABOUT TO KILL YOU AND PUT POOR TABRIAZ THROUGH ***ANOTHER*** KIDNAPPING -- FOR GOD KNOWS ***WHAT*** DEPRAVED REASON --

-- WE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO TAKE ***ACTION.***

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO ***KILL*** HIM! I COULD'VE ***HANDLED*** HIM!

ARE YOU ***SURE,*** SON? THE HAND OF MUMTHAZI IS SUPPOSED TO GIVE THE PERSON WHO POSSESS IT POWER BEYOND IMAGINING!

YOU SAW THE WAY IT WAS ***GLOWING,*** DIDN'T YOU? DO YOU KNOW FOR ***SURE*** THAT YOU CAN STAND UP TO POWER OF THAT MAGNITUDE?

...

NO, I GUESS I DON'T.

WELL, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, MY BOY! YOU'RE OFF TO A ***GREAT*** START!

Uh... ***THANKS,*** Mr. OSBORN. THAT... REALLY MEANS A ***LOT,*** COMING FROM YOU.

FWAP

THE SUFINDIAN GOVERNMENT WILL BE GRATEFUL TO HAVE THIS PRICELESS RUBY *BACK*...

...AND, PRODIGY, THE AMBASSADOR WILL UNDOUBTEDLY REWARD YOU ***HANDSOMELY*** FOR THE SAFE RETURN OF HIS DAUGHTER!

COME, MY DEAR, LET'S GET YOU BACK TO THE EMBASSY...

THE NEXT DAY, 12:05 P.M.

DAILY BUGLE

...I'M VERY PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE SAFE RETURN OF AMBASSADOR CHALIZ'S DAUGHTER, THANKS TO PRODIGY'S INVOLVEMENT...

...ALONG WITH THE HAND OF MUMTHAZI, WHICH ***I*** WAS ONLY ***TOO*** HAPPY TO RECOVER FOR THE FINE PEOPLE OF SUFINDIA.

I REGRET THE RATHER ***DRASTIC*** ACTION TAKEN AGAINST THE CRIMINAL KNOWN AS JACK O'LANTERN, BUT I ASSURE YOU ALL, IT WAS ***UNAVOIDABLE***.

AT THIS TIME, I'D LIKE TO PERSONALLY CONGRATULATE AND ANNOUNCE MY SUPPORT OF THIS BRAVE CRUSADER HERE, PRODIGY, WHO RISKED HIS LIFE TO SAVE TABRIAZ!

I'LL NOW TURN THE PODIUM OVER TO PRODIGY HIMSELF, WHO'D LIKE TO SAY A FEW WORDS...

I, Uh... I JUST WANT TO SAY HOW ***GRATEFUL*** I AM FOR ALL THE WARMTH AND AFFECTION AND TRUST I'VE BEEN SHOWN BY THIS CITY SO FAR. IT'S A ***PLEASURE*** TO SERVE YOU.

I'D ALSO LIKE TO ANNOUNCE THAT AMBASSADOR CHALIZ HAS GIVEN ME A REWARD OF ONE MILLION DOLLARS FOR SAVING HIS DAUGHTER -- WHICH I'VE ALREADY DONATED TO MY FAVORITE ***CHARITY.***

BEFORE I LEAVE, THOUGH, I'D LIKE TO INFORM YOU LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE PRESS THAT I FOUND SOMETHING IN CONUNDRUM'S HEAD-QUARTERS --

-- AN ITEM I THINK YOU'LL FIND OF GREAT ***INTEREST***...

...A ***SPIDER-MAN COSTUME!***

AND I FOUND ENOUGH ***ADDITIONAL*** EVIDENCE THERE TO SUGGEST THAT IT WAS EITHER CONUNDRUM OR JACK O' LANTERN WHO RECENTLY BEAT UP Mr. OSBORN, DISGUISED AS SPIDER-MAN IN ORDER TO ***FRAME*** HIM!

THAT, COUPLED WITH THE TRAPSTER'S RECENT CONFESSION THAT HE FRAMED SPIDER-MAN FOR THE MURDER OF THE CRIMINAL KNOW AS JOEY Z, WOULD SEEM TO COMPLETELY EXONERATE THE WEB-SLINGER!

I'LL BE TURNING ALL OF THIS EVIDENCE OVER TO THE POLICE, RIGHT AFTER THIS PRESS CONFERENCE...

SPIDEY'S BEEN CLEARED! ISN'T THAT GREAT, Mr. OSBORN? HE WASN'T THE GUY WHO BEAT YOU UP AFTER ALL! I KNEW IT ALL ALONG!

HEY, MAYBE YOU AND HE CAN FINALLY BECOME BUDDIES, AY?

FWAP

...I'LL BE TAKING THE REST OF THE DAY OFF.

EUGENE...

LATER...

I FELT A LITTLE LOUSY ABOUT PLANTING THAT EVIDENCE TO CLEAR SPIDER-MAN'S NAME -- IT WASN'T THE MOST ***ETHICAL*** THING TO DO...

...BUT WHEN YOU'RE DEALING WITH A MAN LIKE NORMAN OSBORN, SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO USE TRICKS AS DIRTY AS THE KIND HE USES!

TROUBLE IS, I CAN'T ***PROVE*** IT -- ***YET!***

HE ***GOADED*** ME INTO BEATING HIM UP, VIDEOTAPED THE WHOLE THING AND MADE HIMSELF LOOK LIKE AN INNOCENT ***VICTIM!***

AND I'M ***SURE*** HE WAS BEHIND JOEY Z'S MURDER, AND THAT HE SET SPIDER-MAN UP TO BE ***FRAMED*** FOR IT!

BEEN ONE HECKUVA DAY!

PRODIGY SEEMS TO BE A RESOUNDING SUCCESS AND I WAS FINALLY ABLE TO PUT ONE OVER ON NORMAN!

AND IT WAS FUN TO SHED MY SKIN AND BE SOMEONE ELSE FOR A CHANGE!

NEITHER SPIDER-MAN...

... NOR PETER PARKER! SOMEONE MORE LIKE THE COMIC BOOK HEROES I READ AS A KID -- IDEALIZED, ICONIC FIGURES!

ALL IN ALL, A PRETTY SUCCESSFUL ACTING JOB. I WONDER IF THIS MAKES ME THE ROBERT DENIRO OF THE SUPER HERO SET...?

Ah, WELL...

...IT'S ALMOST A SHAME THAT IT'S ALL COMING TO AN ***END!***

I DON'T GET IT, TIGER...

...I MEAN, WHY GIVE UP BEING PRODIGY? WHO SAYS YOU HAVE TO GO BACK TO BEING SPIDER-MAN?

I ***ADMIT*** IT, MARY JANE -- I HAD A LOT OF ***FUN*** BEING PRODIGY! THE KIND OF FUN I HAVEN'T HAD AS SPIDER-MAN FOR FAR TOO LONG!

DAILY BUGLE
SPIDER-MAN CLEARED OF ALL CHARGES!
OSBORN SAVES PRODIGY'S LIFE, RECOVERS PRICELESS GEM
EXCLUSIVE BY DAVID MCILROY SEE PAGE 3

IT ***IS*** TEMPTING TO CONTINUE AS PRODIGY. THE COPS HAVE ACCEPTED HIM, THE MEDIA HAVE ACCEPTED HIM...

...HECK, EVEN ***NORMAN OSBORN*** SEEMS TO BE ONE OF HIS BOOSTERS! IF HE ONLY KNEW...

Heh! IT MUST'VE ***KILLED*** OSBORN -- NOT TO MENTION ***JAMESON*** -- TO PRINT THE LATEST EDITION OF THE BUGLE!

DAILY BUGLE
NEW YORK'S FINEST DAILY NEWS
SPIDER-MAN CLEARED OF ALL CHARGES!
OSBORN SAVES PRODIGY'S LIFE, RECOVERS PRICELESS GEM
ADRIAN BASHI'S HOLLYWOOD MINUTE PAGE C9
DANISH PRIDE STORMS NYC
EXCLUSIVE BY DAVID MCILROY SEE PAGE 3

BUT THE TRUTH IS, MJ, AS PRODIGY, I'M ONLY ***PLAY-ACTING!***

LET'S ***FACE*** IT -- EVEN ***MIGHTY MOUSE*** WOULDN'T BE CAUGHT DEAD SAYING SOME OF THE CORNY THING'S I'VE SAID AS PRODIGY!

THE PUBLIC ATE IT UP, THOUGH.

YEAH, BUT THAT'S JUST NOT ***ME.*** I WAS BITTEN BY A RADIO-ACTIVE ***SPIDER.*** I HAVE THAT SPIDER'S PROPORTIONATE STRENGTH, SPEED AND AGILITY.

I HAVE A ***SPIDER-SENSE*** -- WHICH HAPPENED TO COME IN PRETTY HANDY YESTERDAY AGAINST JACK O'LANTERN AND CONUNDRUM.

SURE, I CAN USE THOSE ABILITIES AS PRODIGY, OR DUSK, OR RICOCHET, OR THE HORNET...

...BUT ***NONE*** OF THEM WOULD REALLY BE ME! LIKE IT OR NOT, ***SPIDER-MAN*** IS WHO I AM!

AND WITH HIS NAME ***CLEARED***, THERE'S REALLY NO REASON NOT TO BE HIM AGAIN! I GUESS I'M JUST ***STUCK*** WITH HIM!

JUST LIKE YOU'RE STUCK WITH ME, TIGER!

IS THAT SO? WELL...

...I THINK I CAN DEAL WITH ***BOTH!***

BUT YOU KNOW, IT'S VERY HANDY HAVING THAT PRODIGY COSTUME AROUND.

YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN IT MIGHT BECOME ***USEFUL*** AGAIN!

I THINK I'M GONNA HOLD ON TO IT FOR A WHILE.

FINE BY ME...

...I THINK YOU LOOK PRETTY DARNED ***CUTE*** IN IT!

EPILOGUE.

NOT A TOTAL SUCCESS, BUT ACCEPTABLE ENOUGH.

CONUNDRUM'S UNEXPECTED KIDNAPPING OF TABRIAZ IS WHAT SET THE WHOLE THING IN MOTION, AFTER ALL. THAT, AND HIS DEMAND FOR THE HAND OF MUMTHAZI.

THAT WAS A BRILLIANT MANEUVER OF YOURS, HAVING THE HAND STOLEN SO THAT AMBASSADOR CHALIZ WOULD BE DESPERATE, AND EAGER TO ACCEPT YOUR ***HELP.***

WELL, THE IDEA, OF COURSE, WAS FOR ***ME*** TO ***"RECOVER"*** THE HAND, THEREBY MAKING ME RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GIRL'S RETURN.

CHALIZ WOULD THEN OWE ME A TREMENDOUS ***DEBT*** -- ONE HE WOULD, OF COURSE, ***NEVER*** BE ABLE TO REPAY.

BUT ONCE ***PRODIGY*** BECAME INVOLVED, I HAD TO ***IMPROVISE.***

YOU PLAYED YOUR PART ***WELL,*** JACK. THOSE WERE FINE ***SPECIAL EFFECTS*** YOU USED FOR THE HAND'S ***"MYSTICAL POWERS."*** AND YOUR DEATH SCENE WAS MOST ***CONVINCING.***

MY ***"ASSASSINATION"*** SERVES ***BOTH*** OF US: WITH EVERYONE THINKING ME DEAD, I CAN OPERATE MORE ***FREELY*** NOW. AND IT'S MADE YOU EVEN ***MORE*** OF A HERO IN THE EYES OF THE PUBLIC.

YES... MAYBE I HAVE TO SHARE THE CREDIT WITH PRODIGY FOR THE GIRL'S RESCUE, BUT NOW THE ENTIRE NATION OF SUNFIND OWES ME A DEBT OF GRATITUDE FOR RECOVERING THEIR PRECIOUS HAND --

-- AND I INTEND TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THAT!

HERE YOU GO, JACK. PAYMENT IN FULL. QUITE ***GENEROUS,*** I'D SAY, CONSIDERING HOW YOU ONCE TOLD ME TO GO TO ***HADES.***

HEY, I FIGURED A GUY LIKE YOU WOULD CONSIDER THAT A ***COMPLIMENT!***

YOU KNOW... I GUESS I ***DO!***

HA HA HA HA HA HA

NEXT: The RETURN Of The HOBGOBLIN!

MARVEL COMICS

MAY
#1

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

WWW.MARVEL.COM

DEFALCO
BENNETT
LAROSA
MILGROM

THE AMAZING RICOCHET™

MAKE WAY FOR RICOCHET!

VARIANT COVER BY MARK BUCKINGHAM

MARVEL COMICS

MAY
#1

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

PETER PARKER

DUSK™

DUSK FALLS OVER MANHATTAN

VARIANT COVER BY JOHN ROMITA JR., SCOTT HANNA & ATOMIC PAINTBRUSH

MARVEL COMICS

MAY
#1

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

WWW.MARVEL.COM

DEMATTEIS
ROSS
GREEN
MILGROM

THE SPECTACULAR PRODIGY™

OVER THE CITY--
A GREAT
GOLDEN
BEACON
SHINES...

AND
JUSTICE
HAS A
NEW FACE!

VARIANT COVER BY JOHN ROMITA

MARVEL'S MARVEL COMICS® FINEST

SPIDER-MAN®

IDENTITY CRISIS

'RWG and CASE

SPIDER-MAN: IDENTITY CRISIS TPB (1998) COVER BY MIKE WIERINGO & RICH CASE

THE SENSATIONAL HORNET

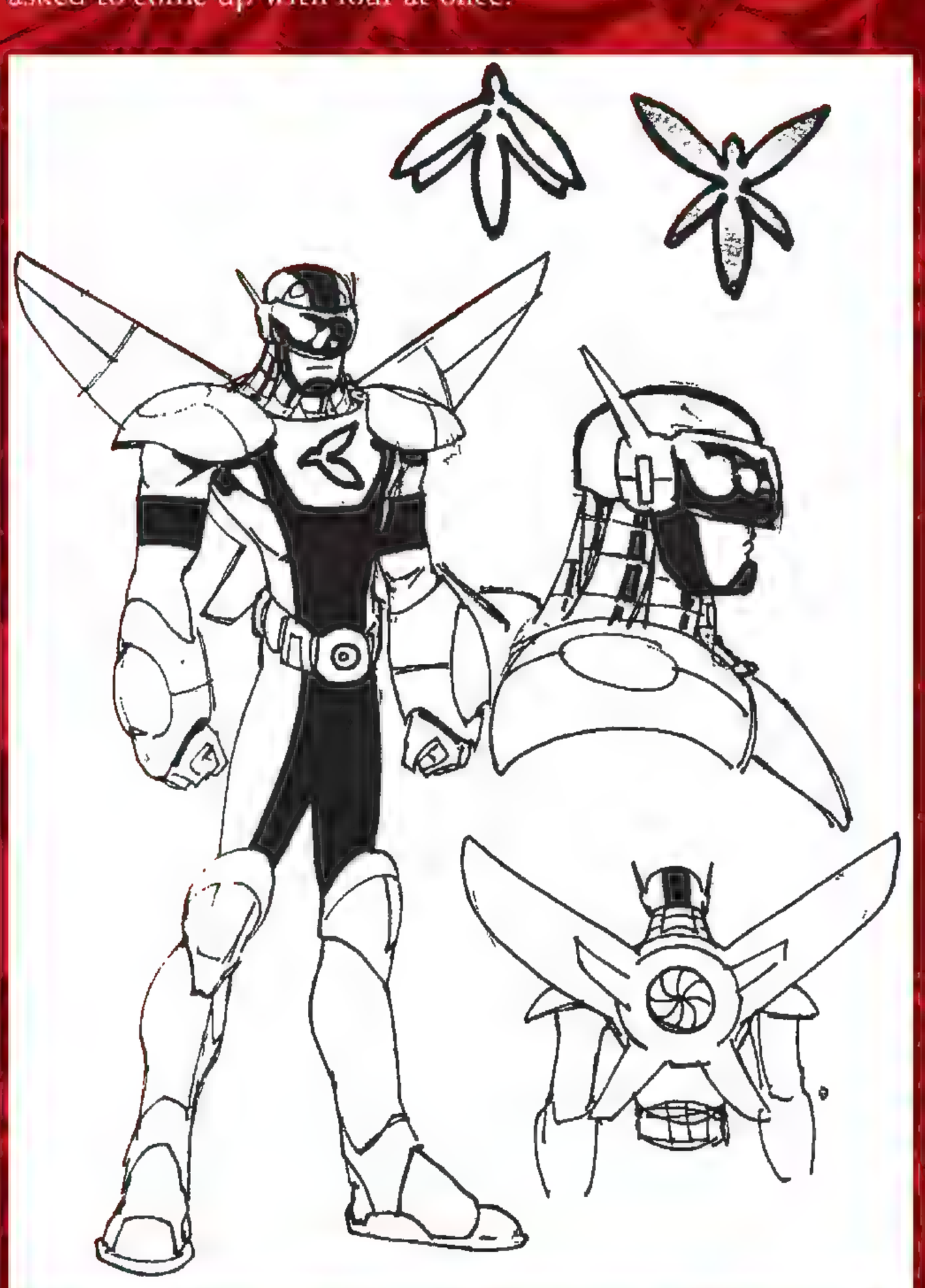
"Contrary to popular belief," said Sensational Spider-Man, er, Hornet writer Todd Dezago, "this was not a gimmick."

"The 'Identity Crisis' storyline grew out of what was happening in the Spider-Man books already. Norman Osborn had been bending over backwards to make life a living heck for Peter, making it nearly impossible for him to go out as our pal Spidey...what else could a poor boy, once bitten by a radioactive spider and possessing an incredible sense of responsibility, do but take on a new identity... or four?!?!"

"A lot of people asked me where Peter could find the time to adopt four new identities, and the answer is, I don't know...but it sure was fun!" added DeZago.

Developing a new super hero is not all fun and games, though – it is daunting for all involved from writer and artist on down through the editor. The new character must have a new name, unique powers and a brand new visual representation. It is tough to breathe life into just one character, so imagine being asked to come up with four at once!

TODD DEZAGO AND PENCILER MIKE WIERINGO, HAVING WORKED TOGETHER ON *SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN* FOR ALMOST THREE YEARS, WERE IN PERFECT SYNC.



Wieringo and DeZago talked about the new character a lot, conceptualizing the hows and the whys before they sat down and actually designed the costume.

The result was the high-flying, wise-cracking Hornet.

"Why the Hornet?" said DeZago. "Well, we had done a story about the Swarm... oh oh! And we had always wanted to find a way for Peter to use Ben's stingers! When it was done, Mike faxed me the sketch, and as always, I thought it was waaaay cool! The next day we realized that it looked a bit like Hank Pym's old Yellowjacket get-up...so what if a buncha people mistook him for Hank? That could be funny."

Mike Wieringo remembers it slightly differently.

"The Hornet resembles the old Yellowjacket uniform because I'm a big Yellowjacket fan!" he said. "Although I didn't think it would be colored magenta when I drew it!"

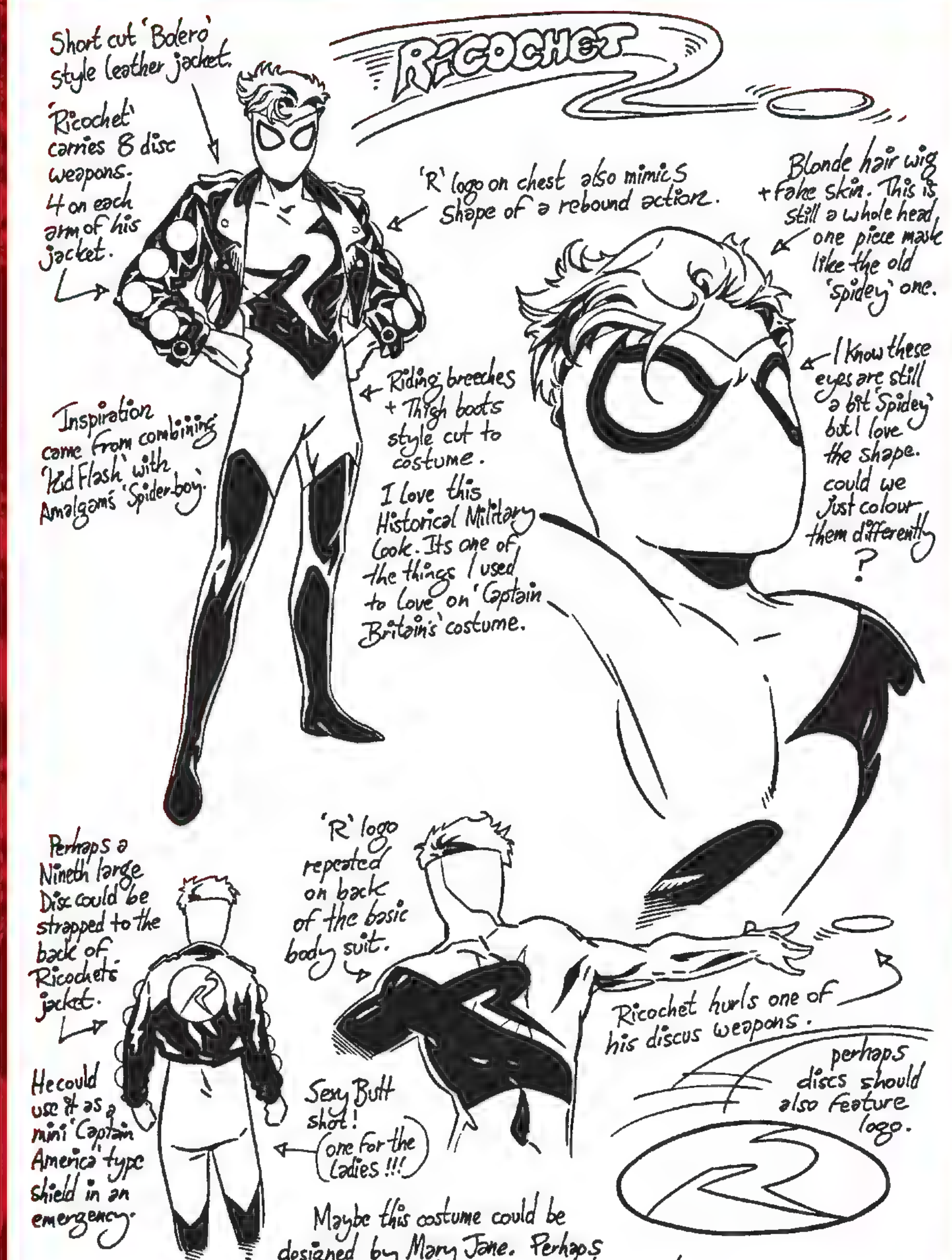
THE AMAZING RICOCHET

ARTIST MARK BUCKINGHAM CLEARLY HAD A BLAST DESIGNING RICOCHET

Drawing inspiration from various clothing styles, as well as a couple of his favorite all-time super hero costumes, Buckingham cooked up a brash, young look for the impulsive Ricochet.

"I liked that historical/military look and I had Captain Britain in mind when I started. Other people have since told me that Ricochet looks like 'Madman,' but I didn't realize this at the time," said Buckingham.

"I combined Captain Britain with the Amalgam Spider-Boy. I liked the Spider-Man-with-jacket look. That started me rolling and then I added the Captain Britain riding breeches. The logo was just me trying to interpret ricochet action as a stylized letter 'R.'"

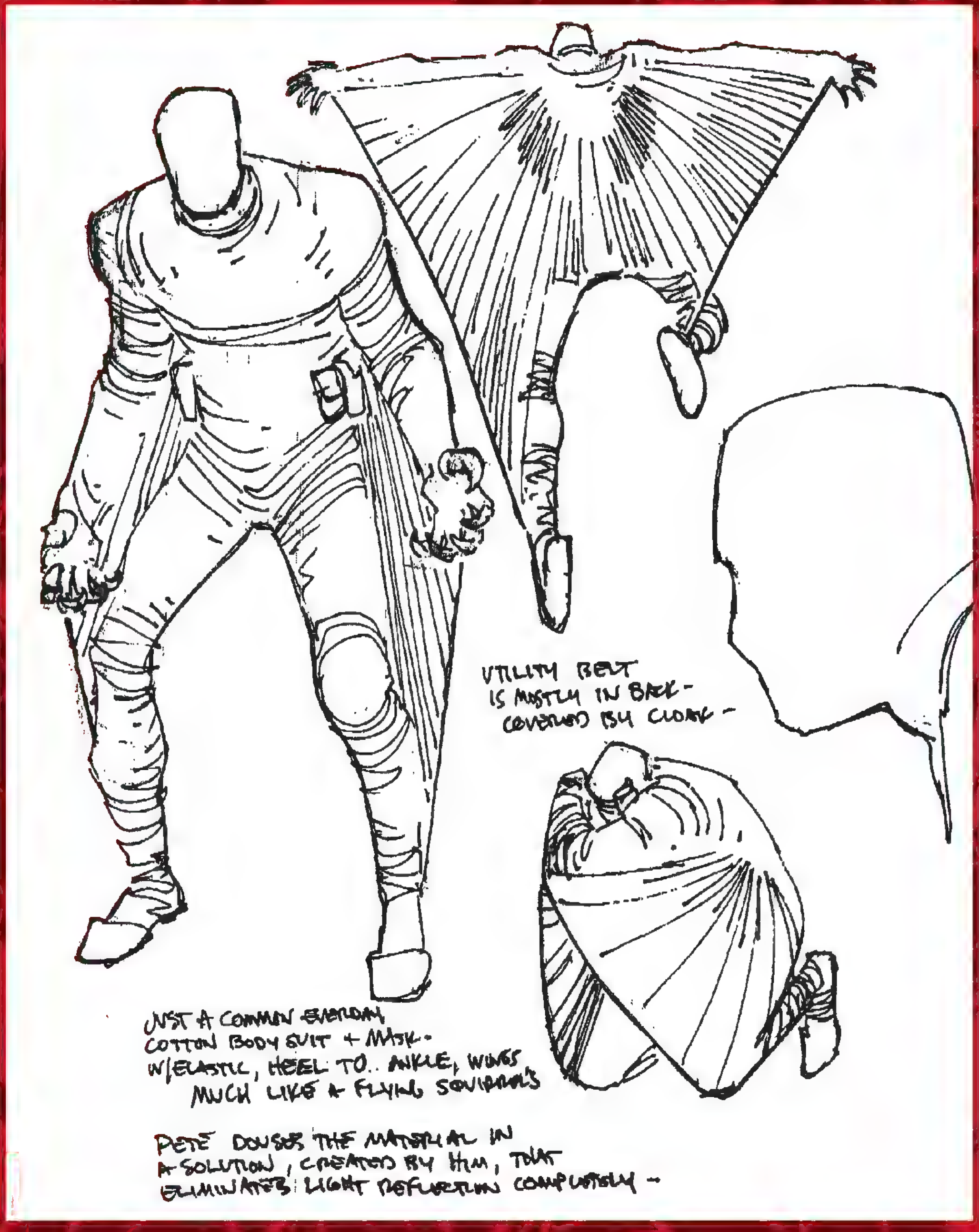

RICOCHET
Short cut 'Bolero' style leather jacket.
'Ricochet' carries 8 disc weapons. 4 on each arm of his jacket.
Inspiration came from combining 'Kid Flash' with Amalgam's 'Spider-boy'.
'R' logo on chest also mimics shape of a rebound action.
Riding breeches + Thigh boots style cut to costume.
I love this Historical Military look. Its one of the things I used to love on 'Captain Britain's' costume.
Blonde hair wig + fake skin. This is still a whole head, one piece mask like the old 'Spidey' one.
I know these eyes are still a bit 'Spidey' but I love the shape. could we just colour them differently ?
Perhaps a Nineth large Disc could be strapped to the back of Ricochet's jacket.
He could use it as a mini 'Captain America' type shield in an emergency.
'R' logo repeated on back of the basic body suit.
Sexy Butt shot! (one for the ladies !!!)
Ricochet hurls one of his discus weapons.
perhaps discs should also feature logo.
Maybe this costume could be designed by Mary Jane. Perhaps she was inspired by seeing handsome actor Colin Firth as 'Darcy' in the BBC's Production of 'Pride + Prejudice' and fancied seeing Peter Parker in Riding gear! Just a thought.....
Mark Buckingham

PETER PARKER

DUSK

THE GLOOMY AND MYSTERIOUS DUSK BROUGHT OUT PETER'S DARKER, MYSTERIOUS SIDE.

"We originally intended for the Dusk costume to have been invented by Peter himself," said Macchio. "But as the storyline developed, we realized it was just impossible for even an advanced intellect such as Peter Parker's to come up with so many different gadgets and inventions in so short a time."

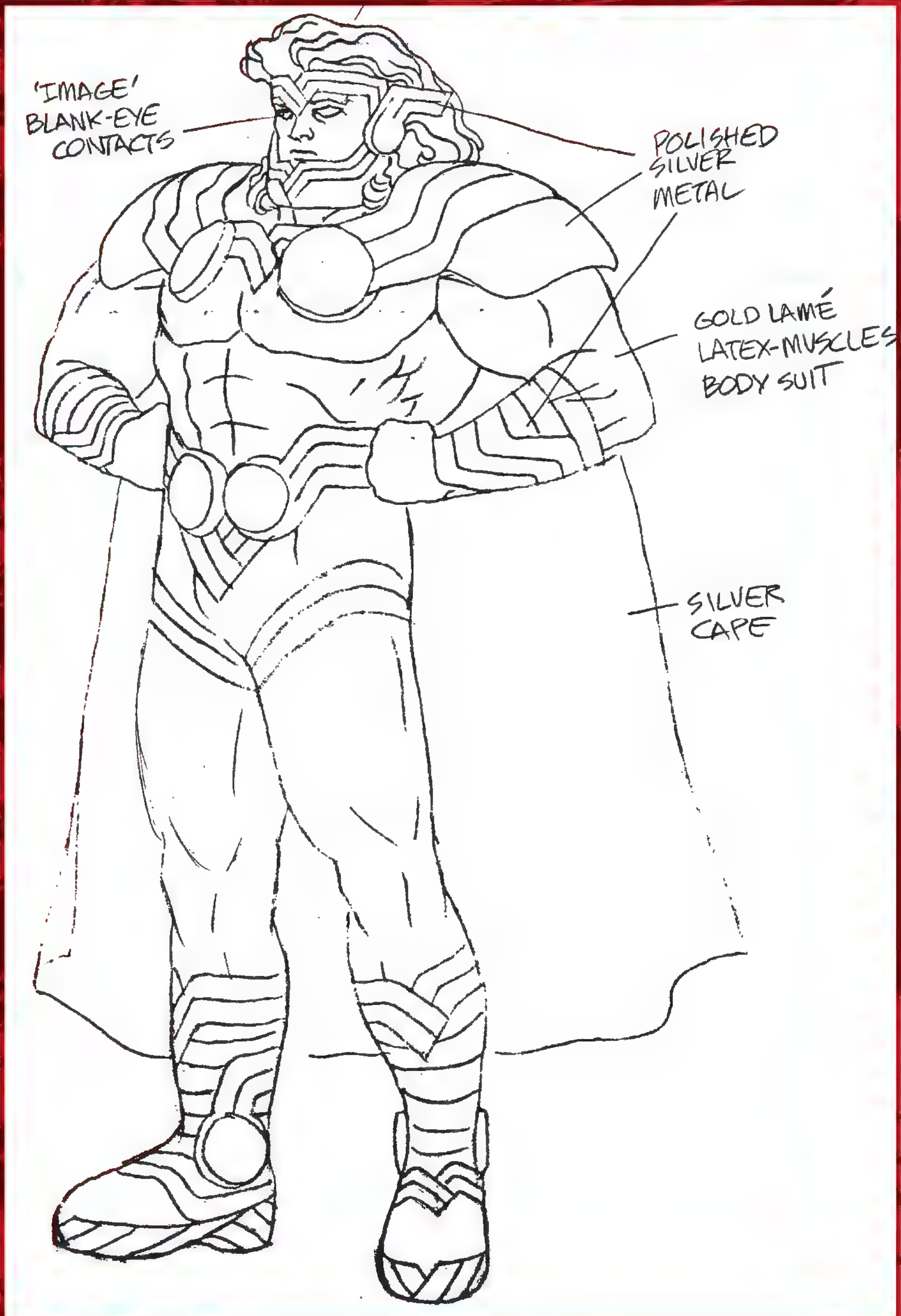

UTILITY BELT IS MOSTLY IN BACK - COVERED BY CLOAK -
JUST A COMMON EVERYDAY COTTON BODY SUIT + MASK - W/ELASTIC, HEEL TO ANKLE, WORKS MUCH LIKE A FLYING SQUIRREL'S
PETE DOUSES THE MATERIAL IN A SOLUTION, CREATED BY HIM, THAT ELIMINATES LIGHT REFLECTION COMPLETELY -

"Luckily, Howard Mackie thought up the idea of the Dusk costume coming from a different dimension altogether! This added a level of mystery and unpredictability that fit the tone of the Dusk character. Since we wanted Dusk to pose as a villain, John Romita, Jr. created a dark and mysterious appearance that blended perfectly with Howard's idea of a character whom the Trapster could take into his confidence."

PRODIGY

"THE IDEA BEHIND PRODIGY WAS TO HAVE HIM PLAY THE ROLE OF THE OLD-FASHIONED AND FUN HERO," said John Marc DeMatteis, writer of *Spectacular Spider-Man/Prodigy*. "Peter Parker was behind the mask, spouting off goofy dialogue and acting out the role of the 1950s hokey hero and enjoying himself. I hope people got the point that we were trying to lighten up and have fun."

"Because Spider-Man was such a departure from the classic super hero mold when he first debuted," added editor Ralph Macchio, "we thought it would be neat to make Prodigy representative of the classic super hero. The public accepted him immediately as a shining beacon of hope. This was also intentional, to contrast with the public's constant mistrust of Spider-Man."



According to Macchio, Marvel Senior Art Director Michael Golden's original design showed a proud figure that evoked the stature of the Greek gods, with some bold Jack Kirby highlights most visible in the headpiece, boots and armbands.

"We thought the open helmet showed a bit too much of Peter's face to be believable, however, so we went to more of a helmet look and adopted a fake nose for Peter to wear. We kept the basic design of the costume, however, which had a very Art Deco feel which seemed to represent the old-fashioned values that Prodigy embodied."

IF THE HORNET IS REALLY SPIDER-MAN, THEN WHO'S RICOCHET?

Sensational Spider-Man #27-28
Tom [illegible]ago • Mike Wieringo • Richard Case

MARVEL
www.marvel.com or AOL at keyword:marvel
©1998 Marvel Characters Inc. All rights reserved.

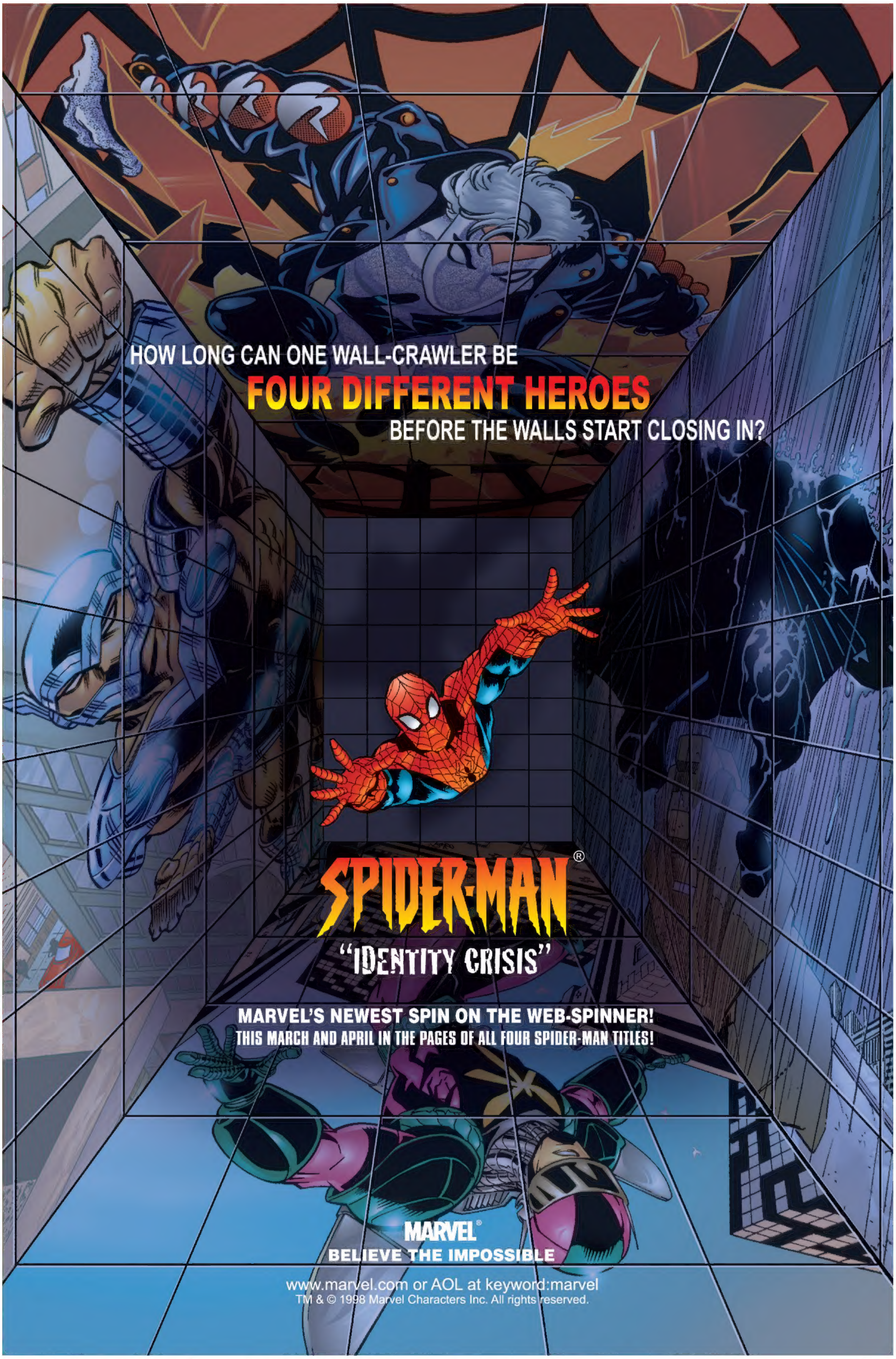
Peter Parker, Spider-Man #92-93

Howard Mackie • John Romita Jr. • Scott Hanna

MARVEL

www.marvel.com or AOL at keyword:marvel

TM & © 1998 Marvel Characters Inc. All rights reserved.


HOW LONG CAN ONE WALL-CRAWLER BE
FOUR DIFFERENT HEROES
BEFORE THE WALLS START CLOSING IN?
SPIDER-MAN®
"IDENTITY CRISIS"
MARVEL'S NEWEST SPIN ON THE WEB-SPINNER!
THIS MARCH AND APRIL IN THE PAGES OF ALL FOUR SPIDER-MAN TITLES!
MARVEL®
BELIEVE THE IMPOSSIBLE
www.marvel.com or AOL at keyword:marvel
TM & © 1998 Marvel Characters Inc. All rights reserved.

MEET THE MARVEL UNIVERSE'S NEWEST HEROES!

The coldly efficient Prodigy. The shadowy avenger known as Dusk. The hyper-kinetic, free-wheeling Ricochet. The high-flying wonder called Hornet. They're here, they're hot, and they're wildly popular. There's just one catch: For these four heroes to live, Spider-Man must die!

Collecting *Sensational Spider-Man (1996) #27-28, Amazing Spider-Man (1963) #434-435, Spider-Man (1990) #91-92* and *Spectacular Spider-Man (1976) #257-258* — written by Todd Dezago, Mike Wieringo, Tom DeFalco, Howard Mackie, J.M. DeMatteis and Glenn Greenberg; and illustrated by Mike Wieringo, Joe Bennett, John Romita Jr. and Luke Ross.

MARVEL

Shadowcat